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Doreswamy

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(54) **PEDIATRIC LARYNGOSCOPE, AND METHOD OF USE**

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A61B 1/00 (2006.01)
A61B 1/07 (2006.01)
A61B 1/06 (2006.01)
A61B 1/04 (2006.01)

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CPC **A61B 1/267** (2013.01); **A61B 1/00124** (2013.01); **A61B 1/04** (2013.01); **A61B 1/0661** (2013.01); **A61B 1/0669** (2013.01); **A61B 1/0676** (2013.01); **A61B 1/07** (2013.01); **A61B 1/2673** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC .. A61B 1/04; A61B 1/06; A61B 1/267; A61B 1/2673

See application file for complete search history.

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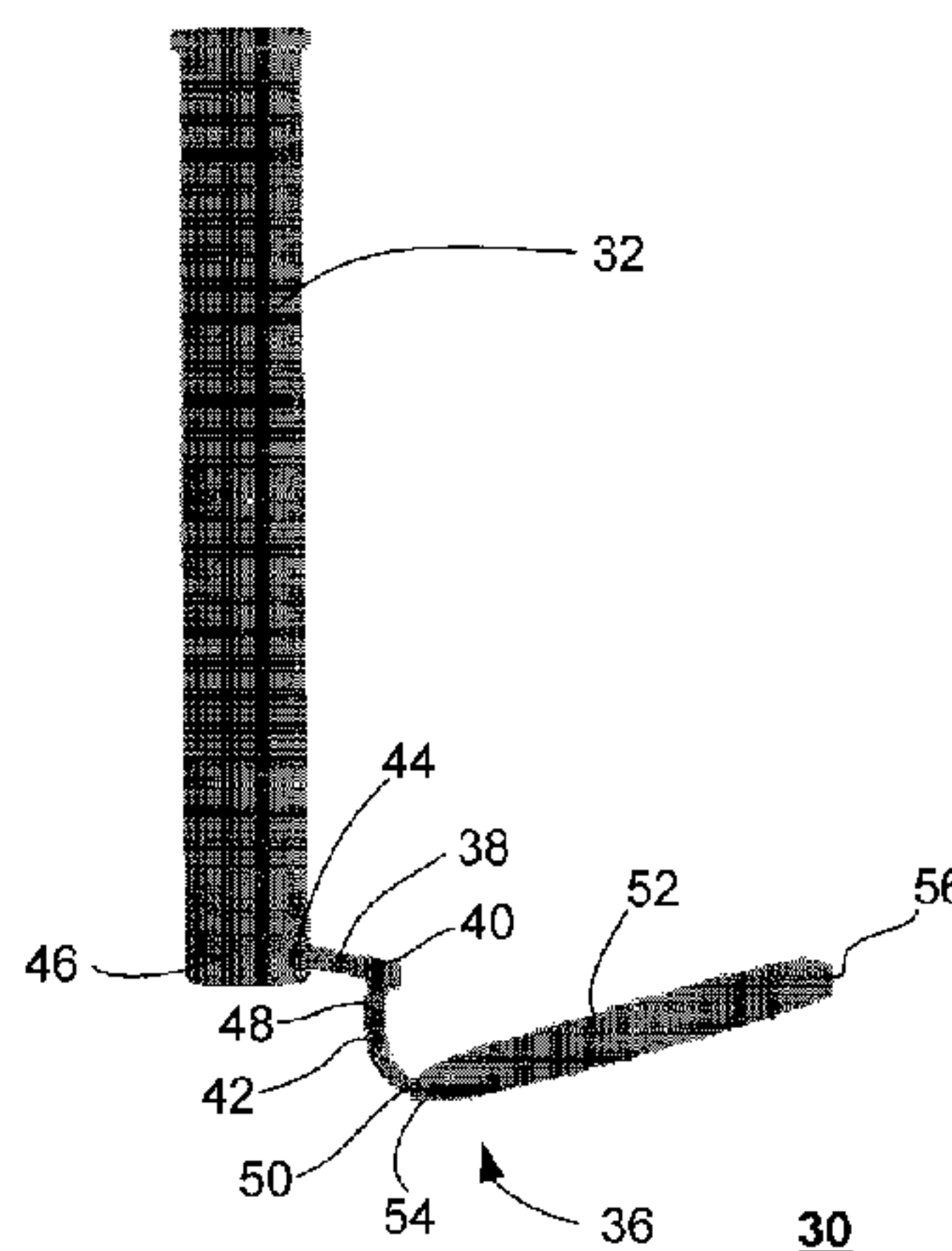
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Primary Examiner — Zade Coley

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A laryngoscope assembly having: a handle; an offset member having a first end coupled to said handle; and a blade coupled to a second of said offset member; and wherein said offset member is orthogonal to said handle and said blade, and disposes said blade away from said handle to increase visibility within a buccal cavity of a patient by placing said handle away from a line of sight of an operator when said blade is placed in said buccal cavity.

17 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets



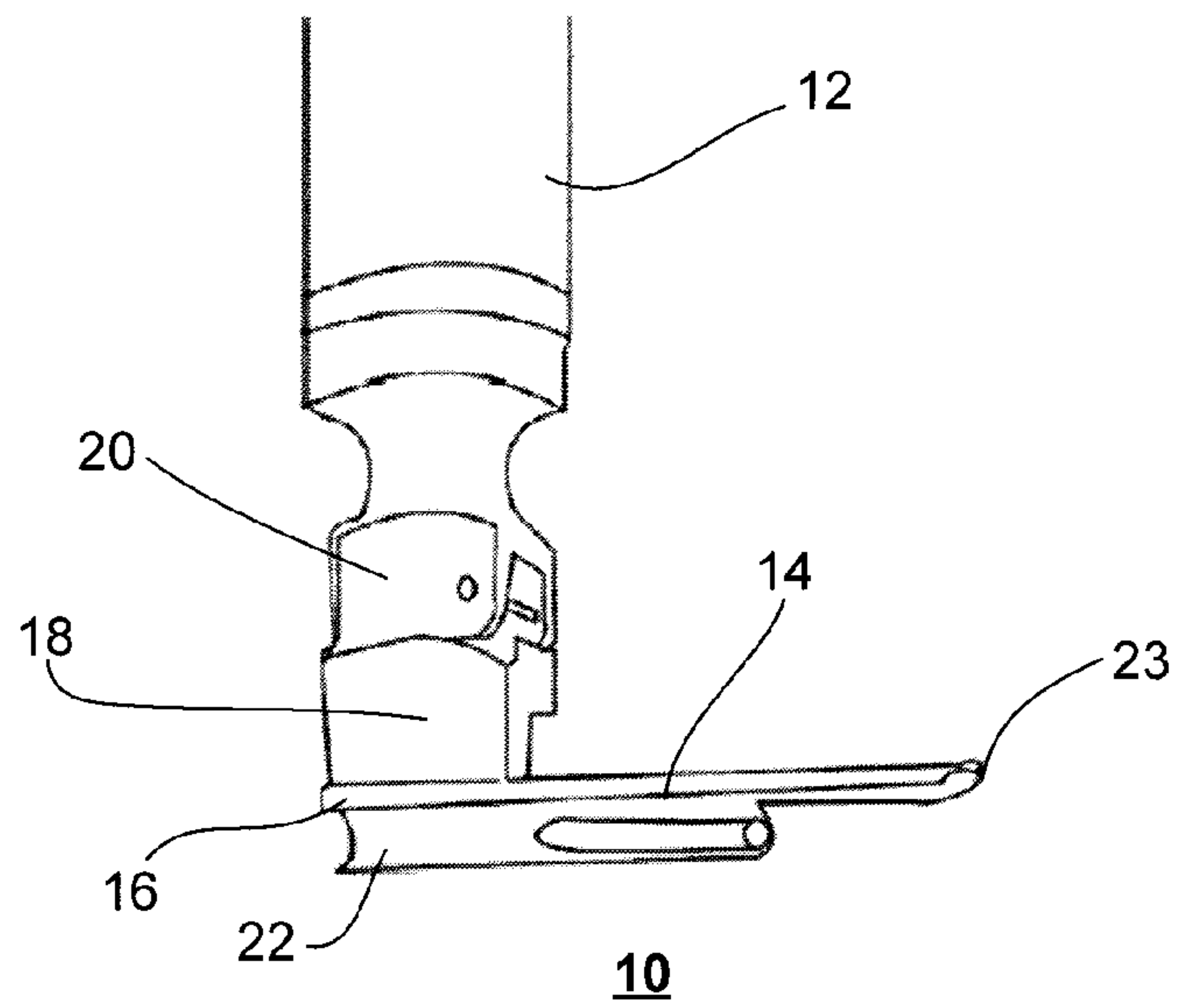


Figure 1 (prior art)

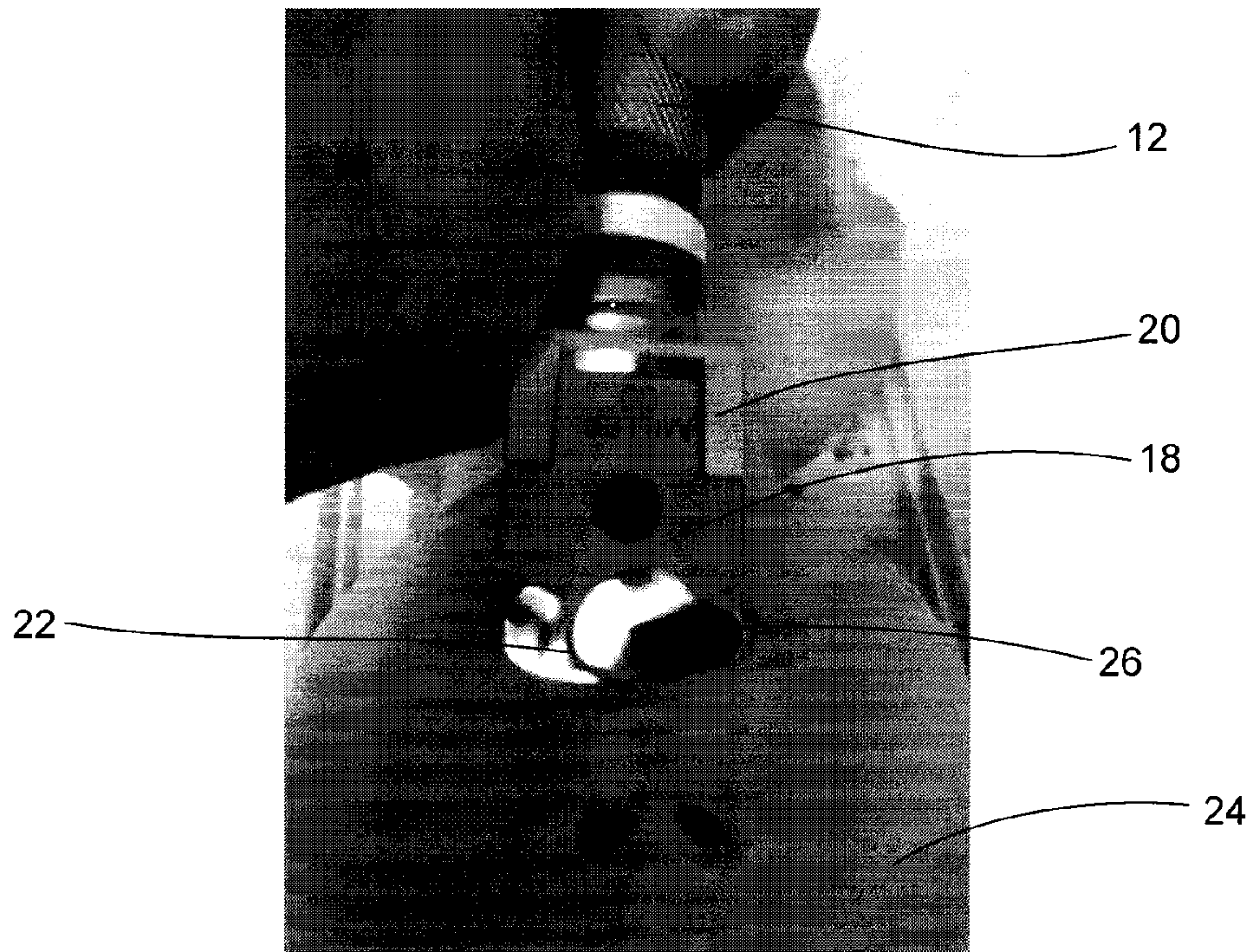


Figure 2 (prior art)

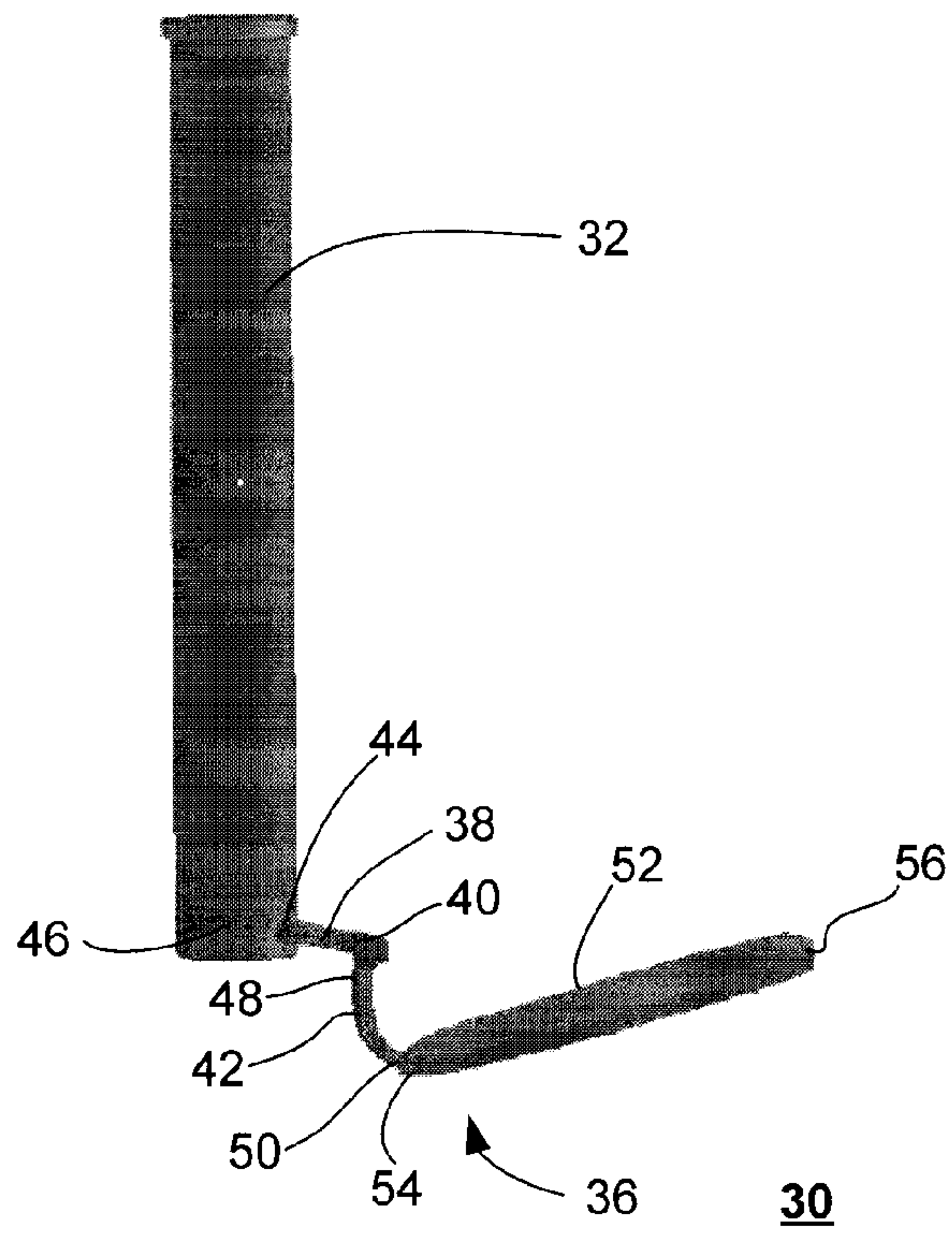


Figure 3

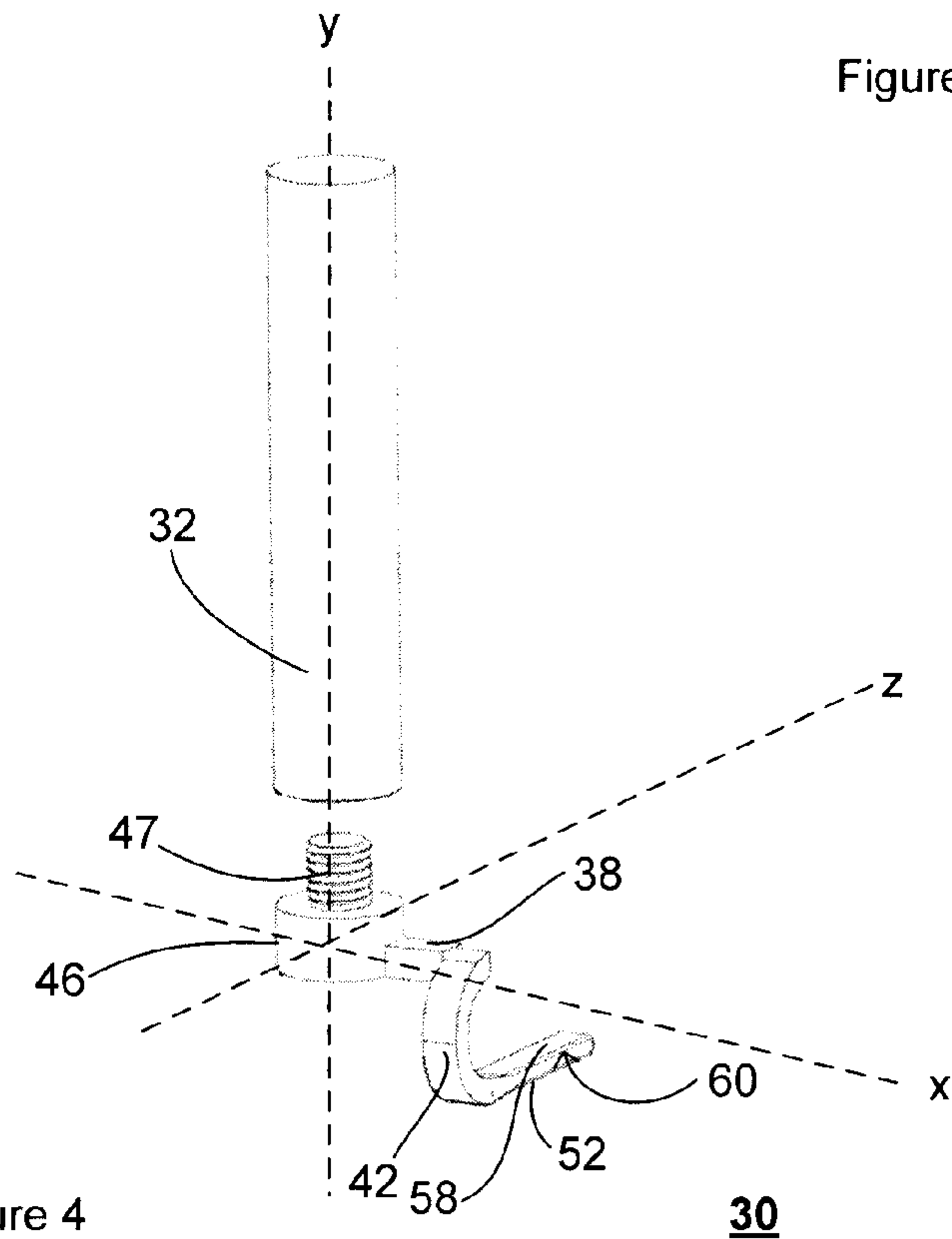


Figure 4

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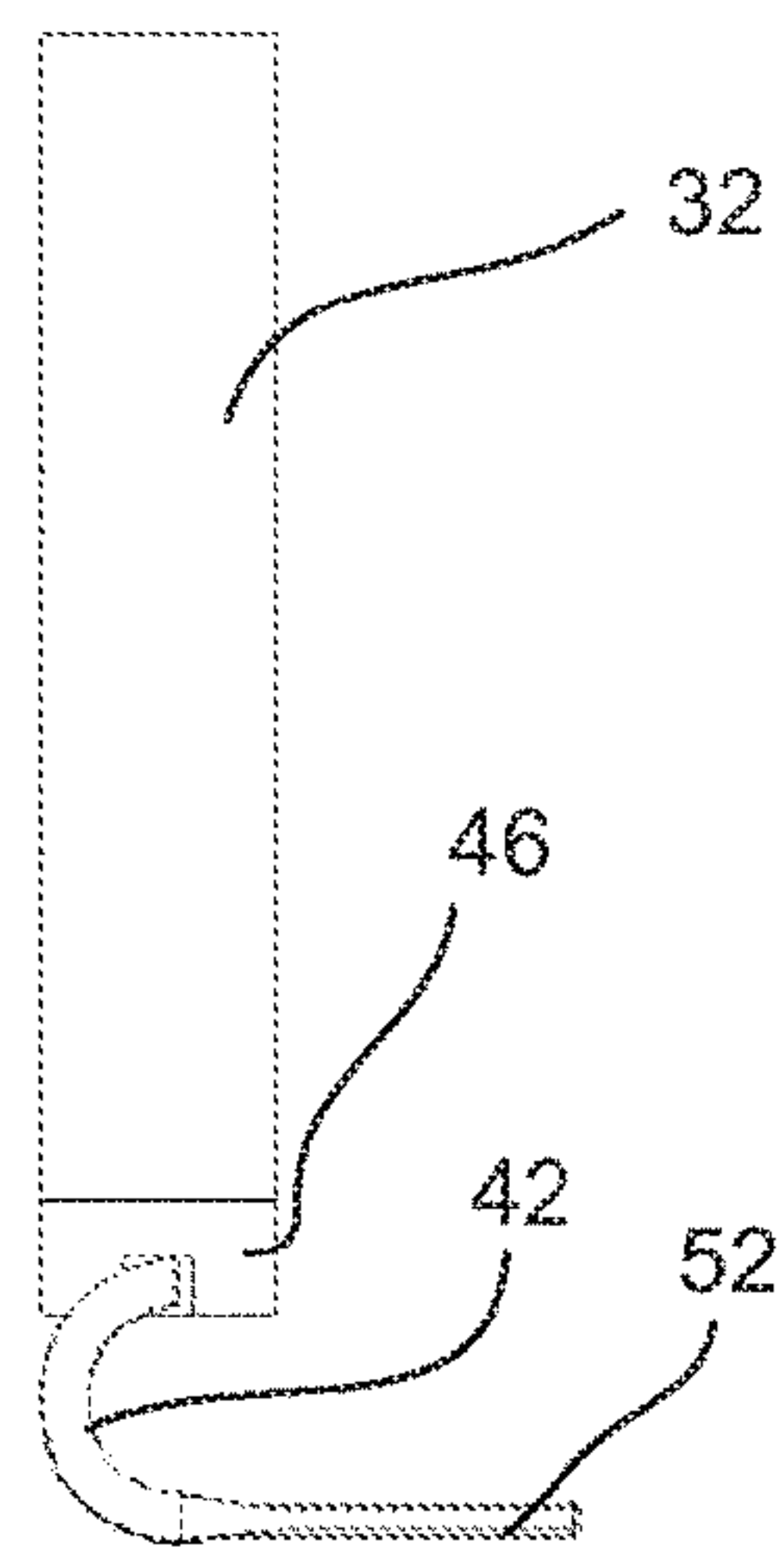


Figure 5a

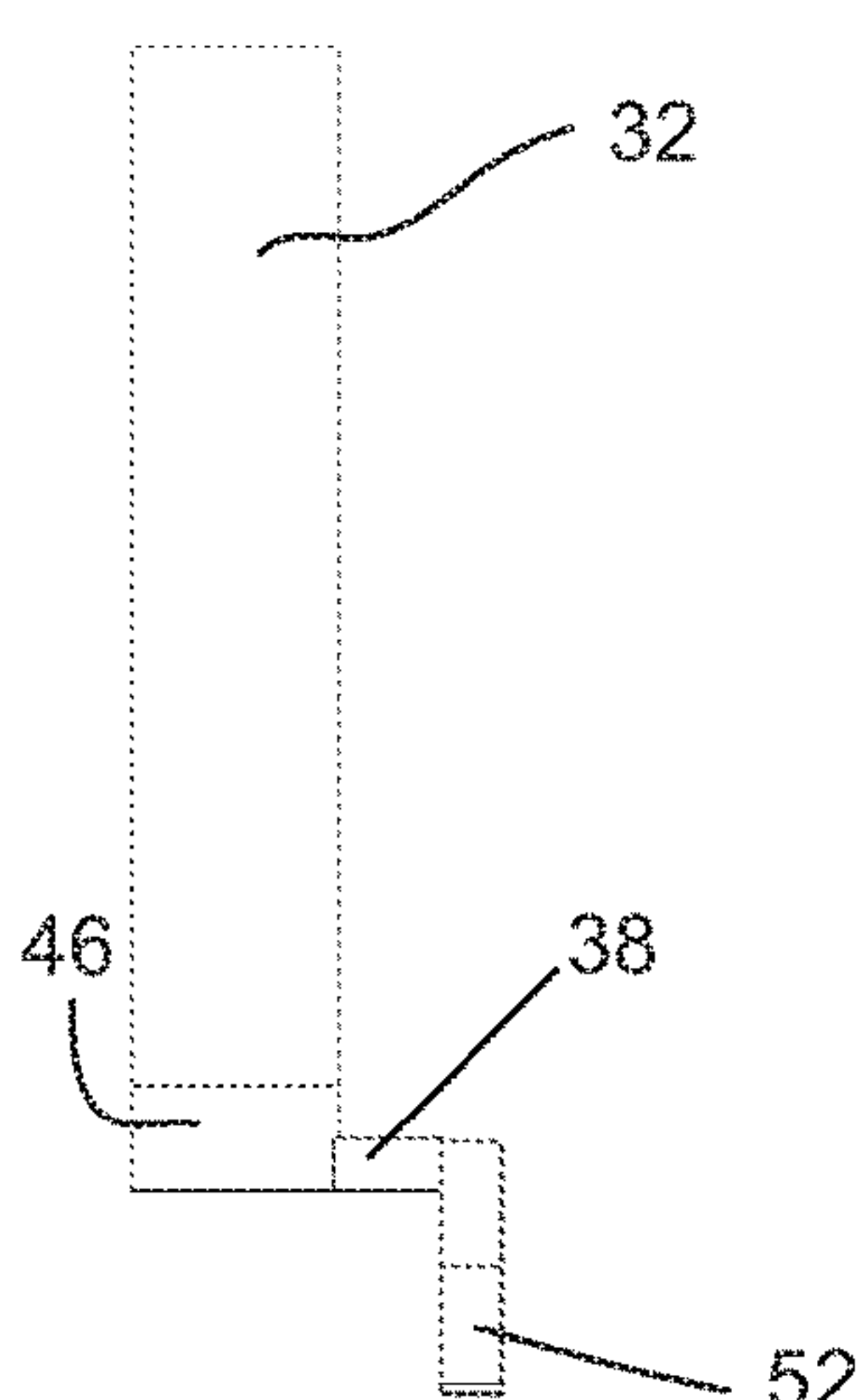


Figure 5b

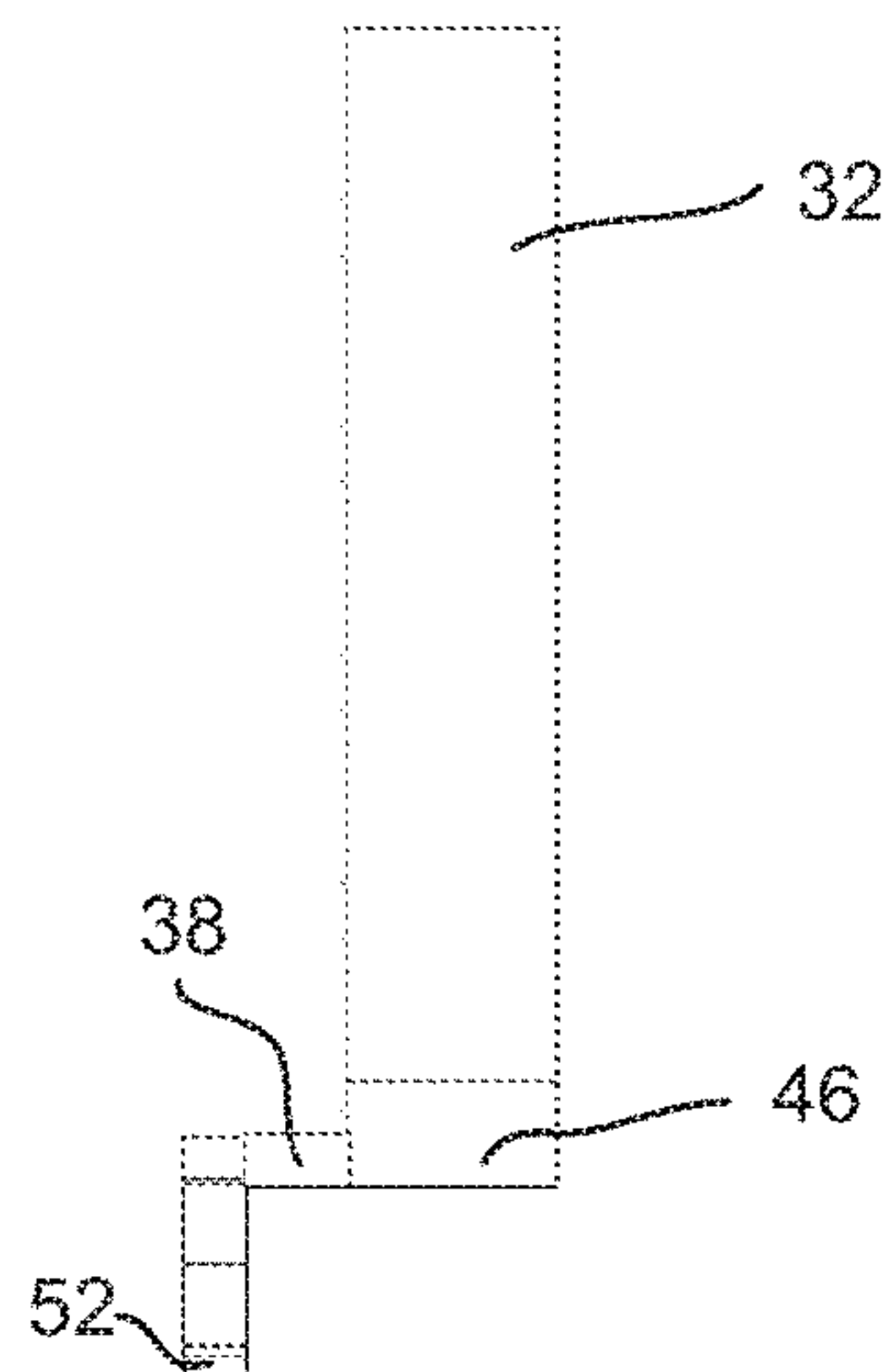


Figure 5c

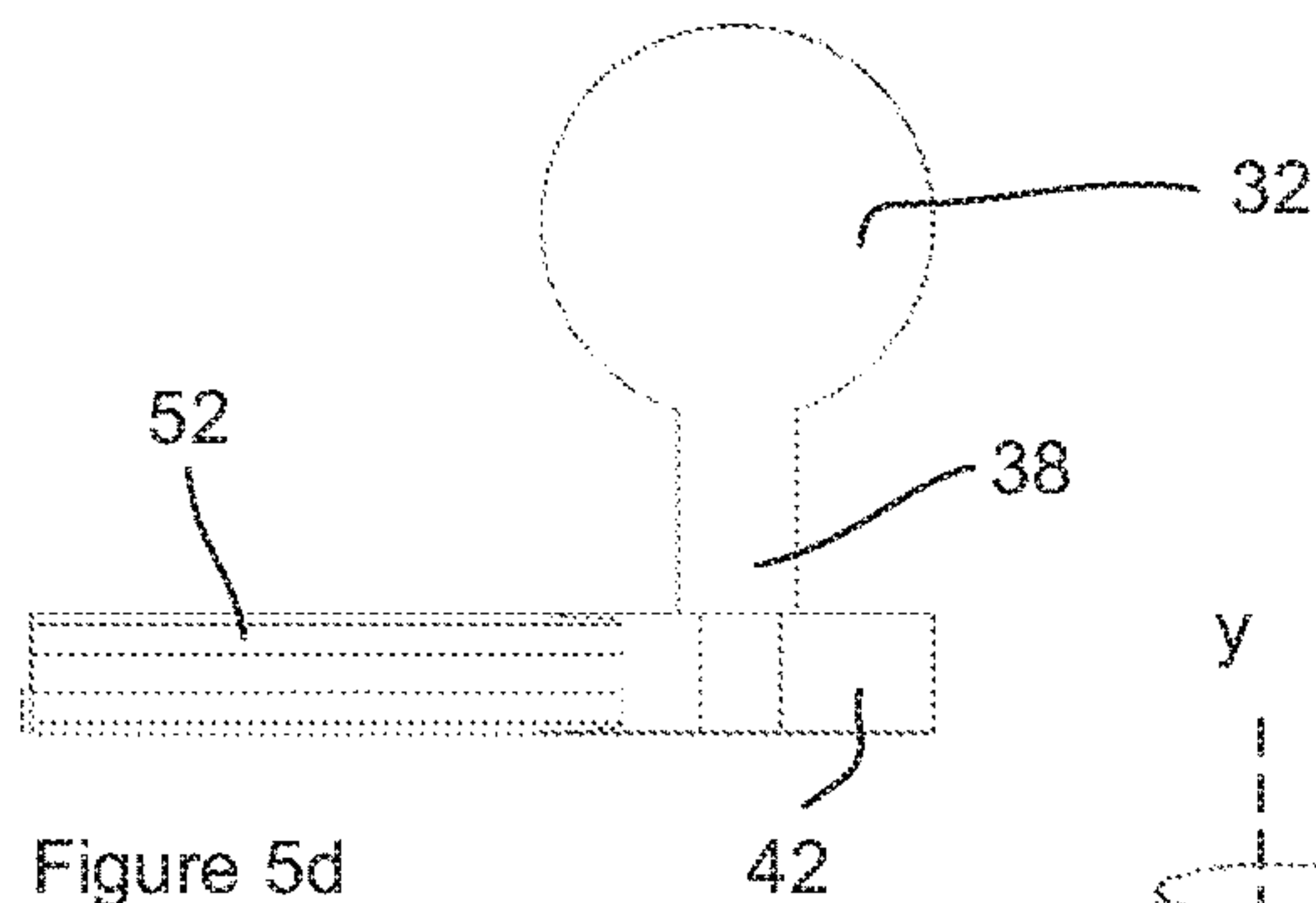


Figure 5d

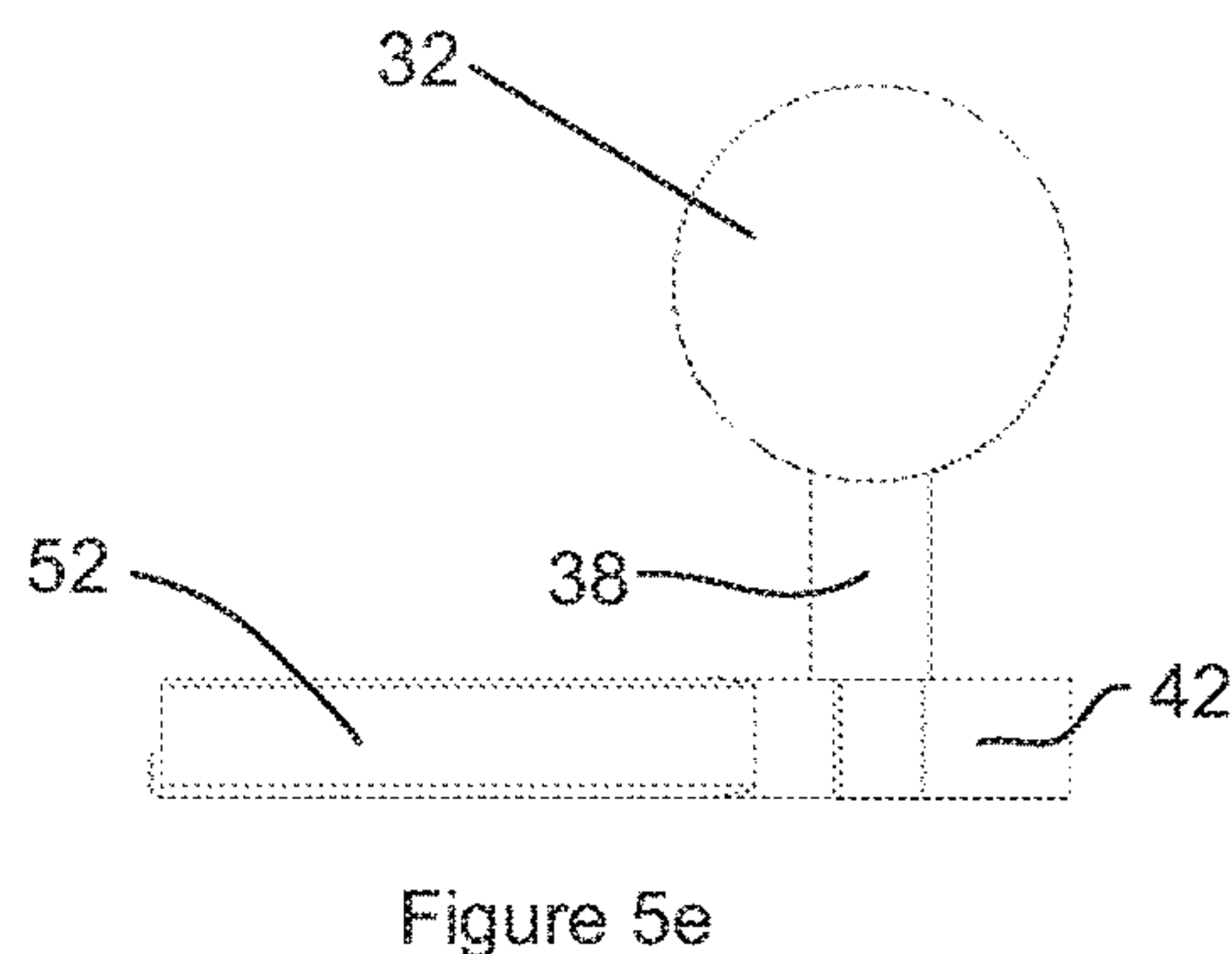


Figure 5e

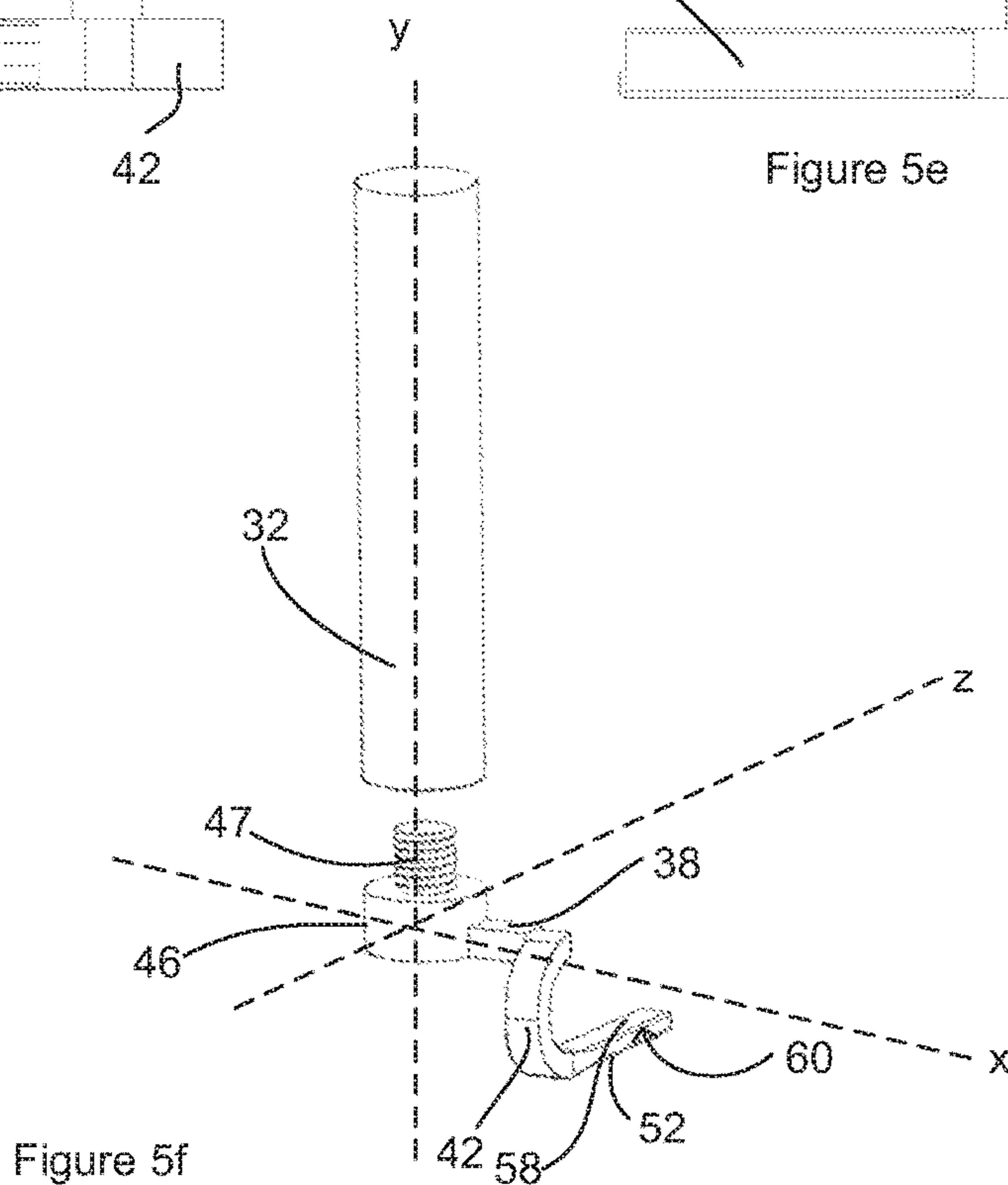
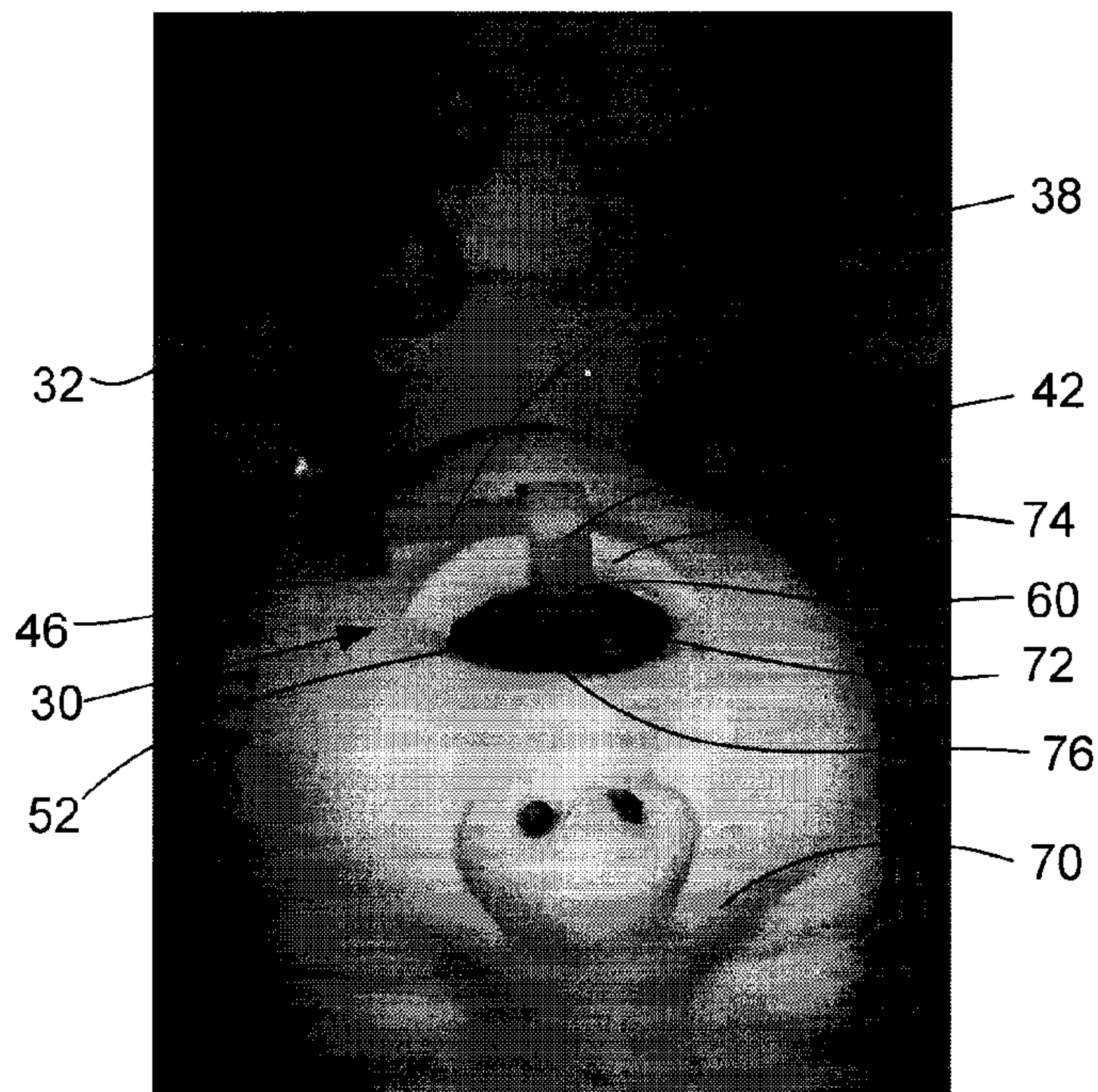
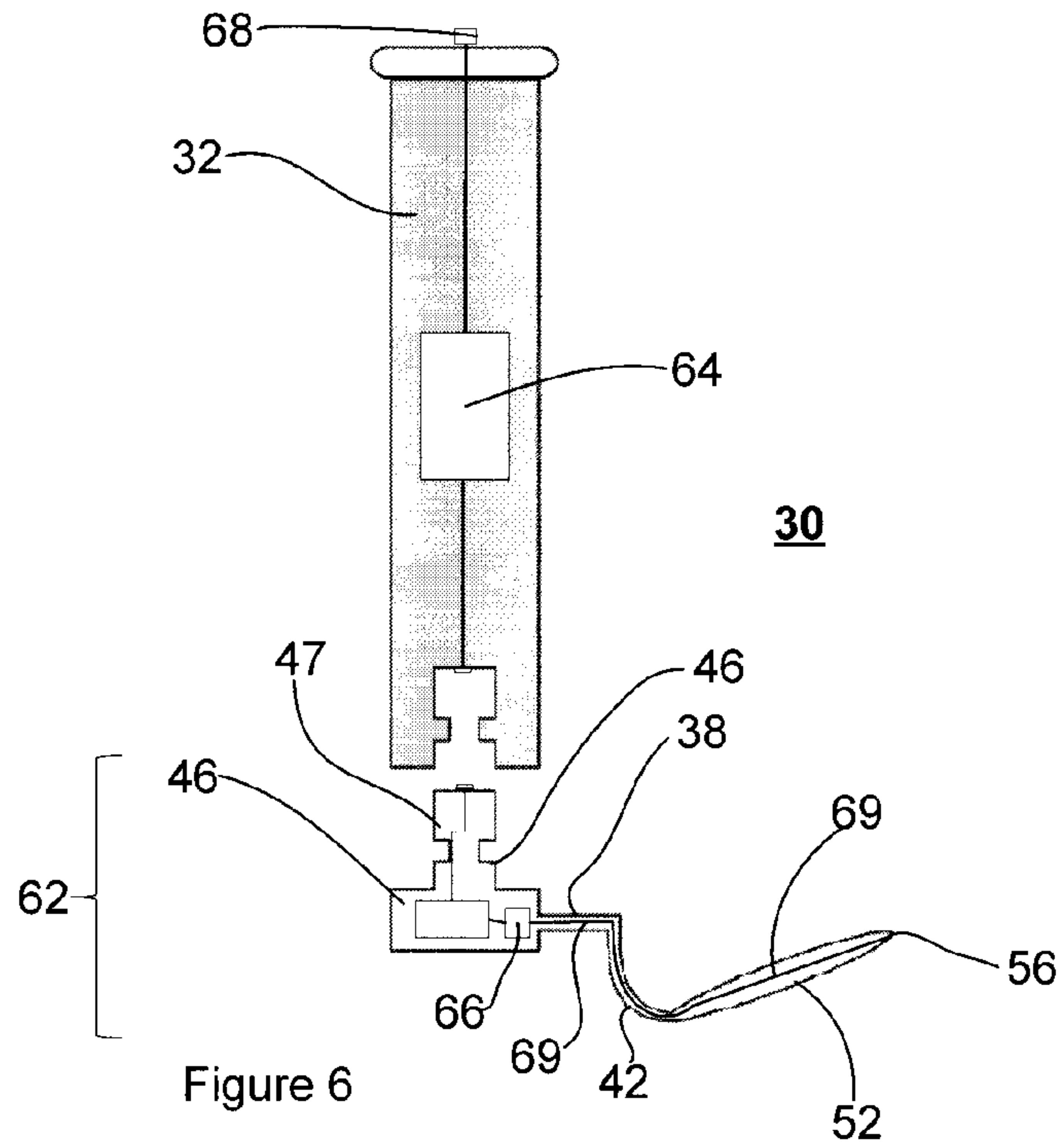


Figure 5f



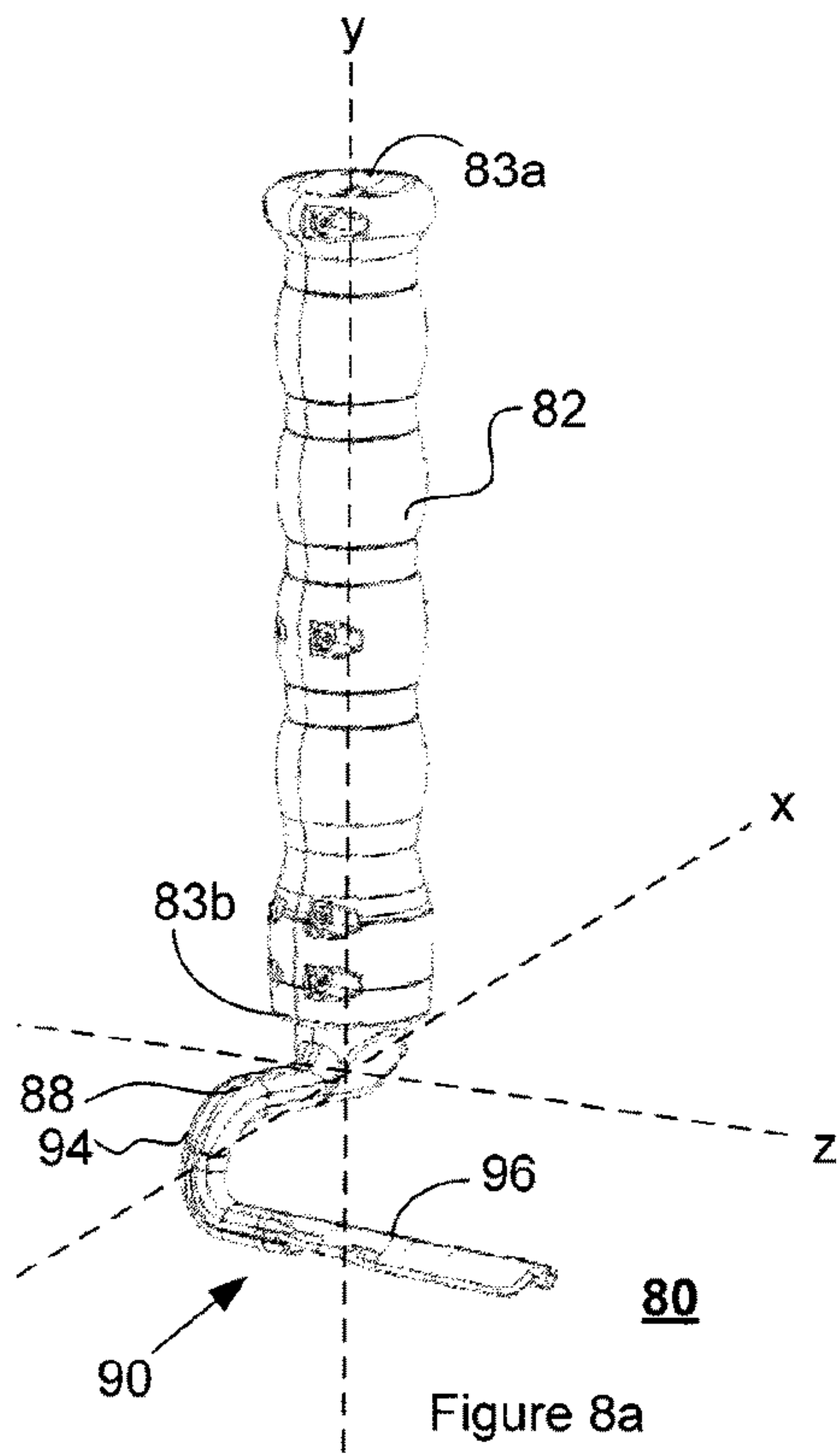


Figure 8a

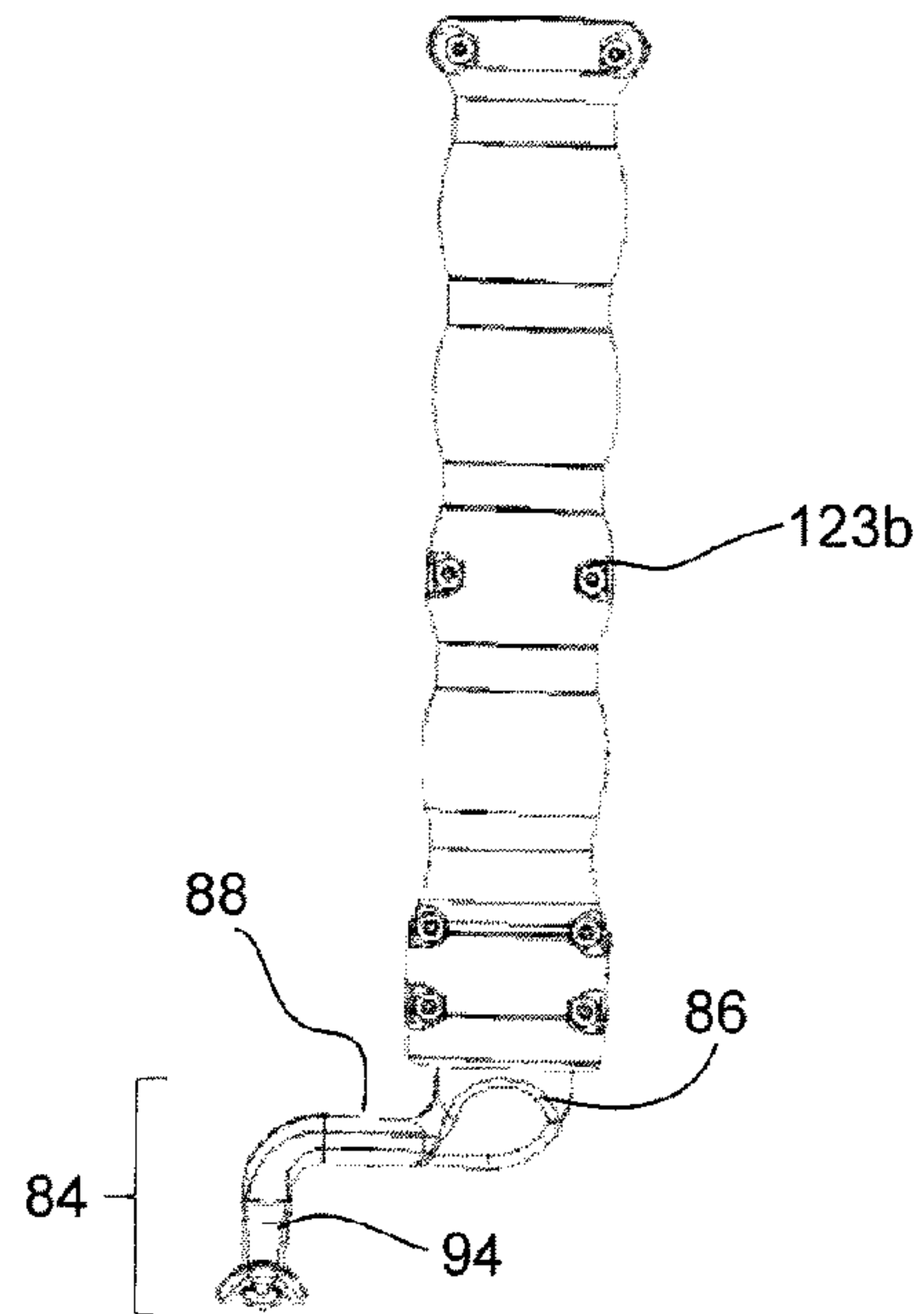


Figure 8b

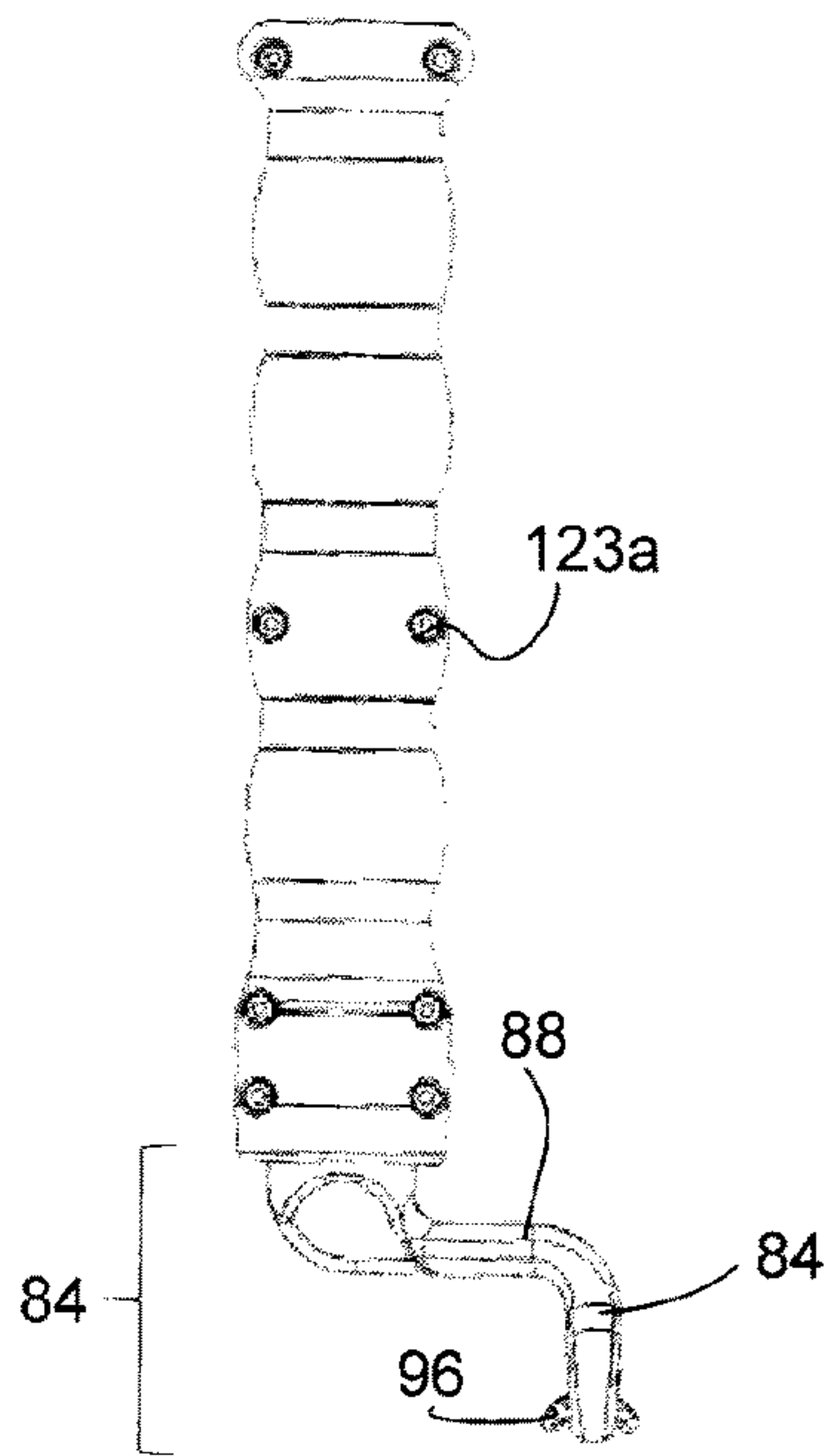


Figure 8c

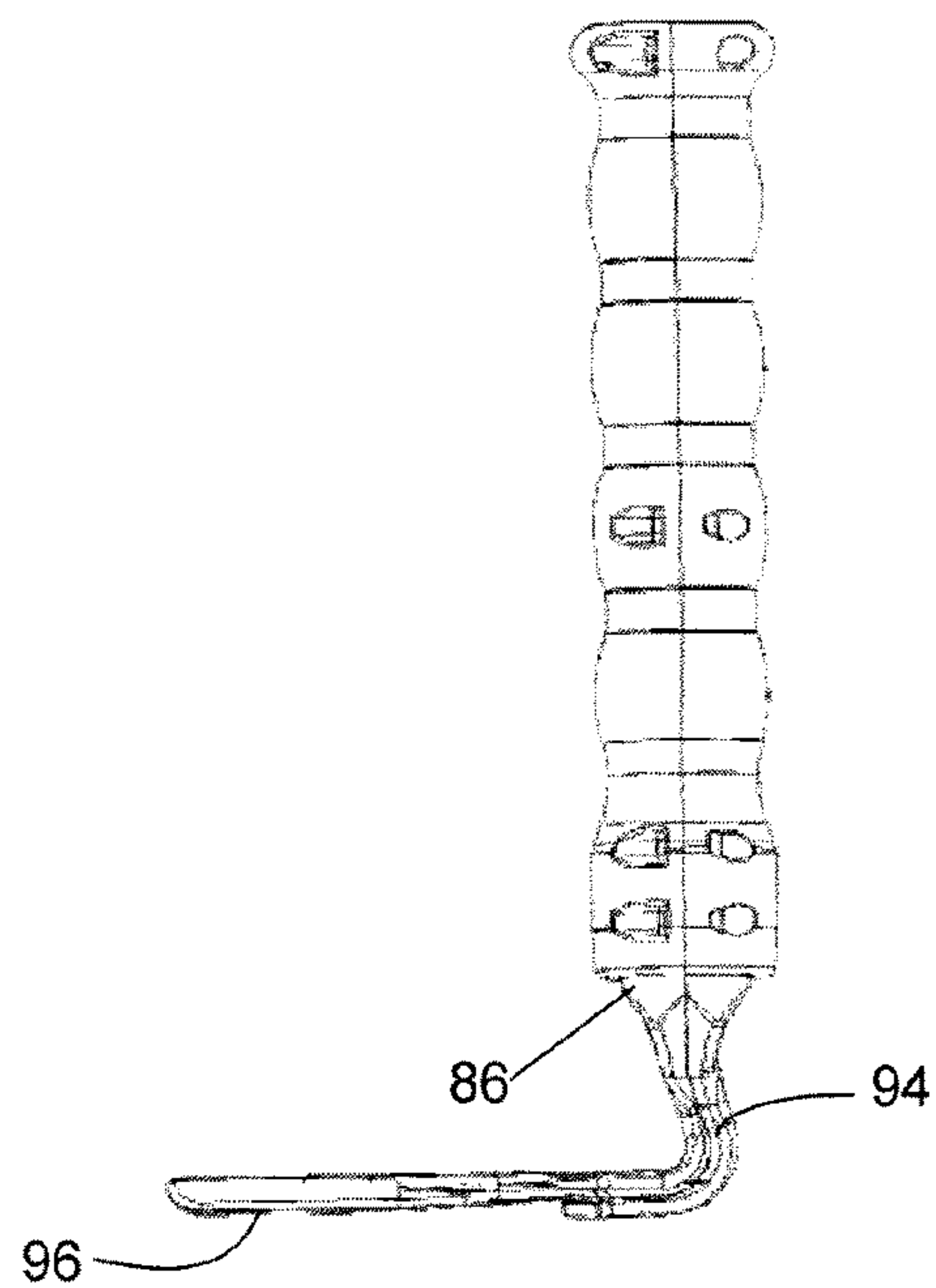


Figure 8d

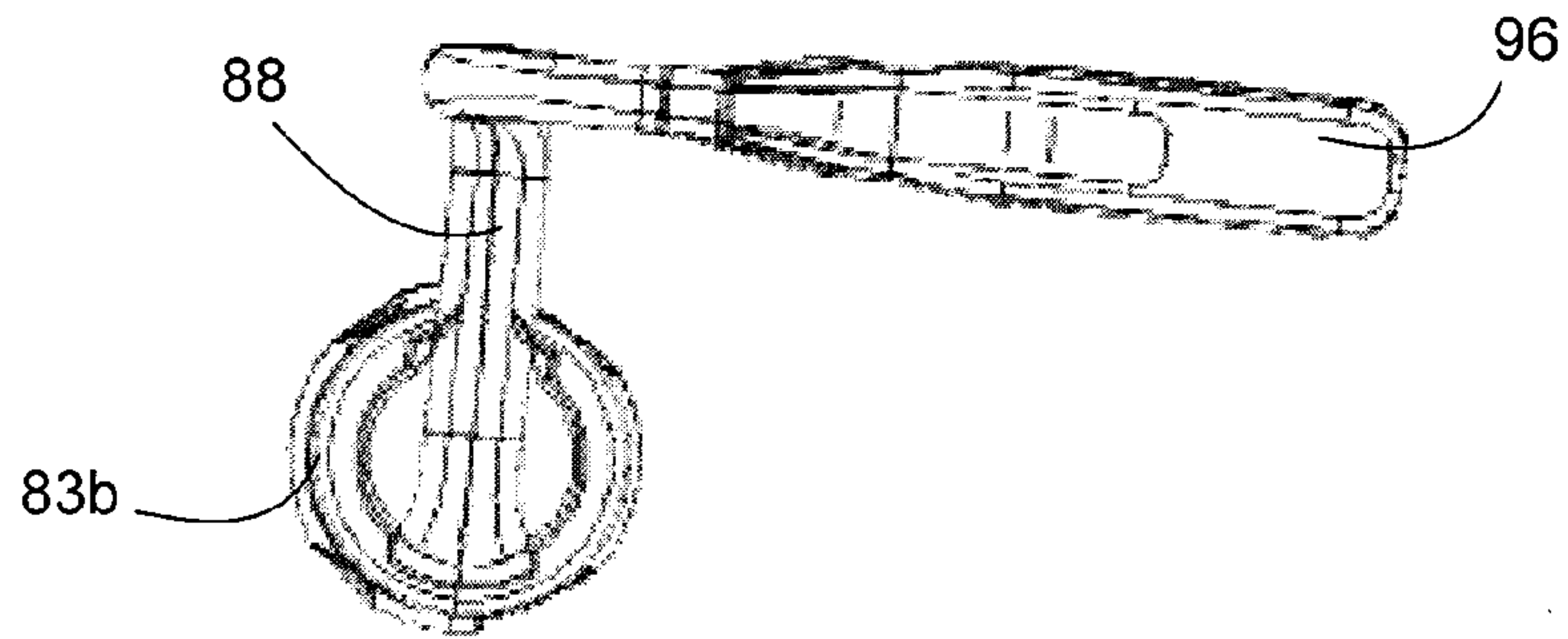


Figure 8e

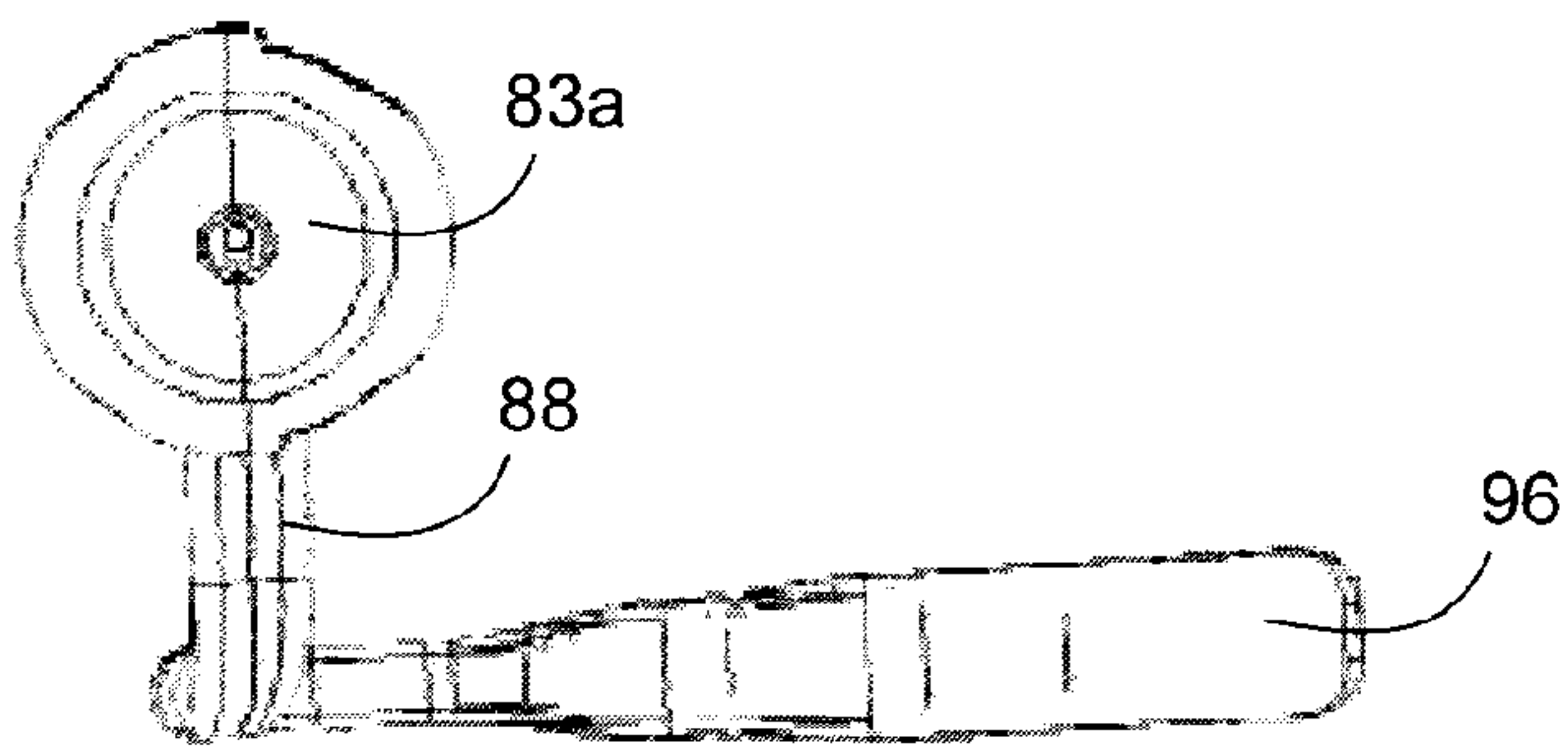
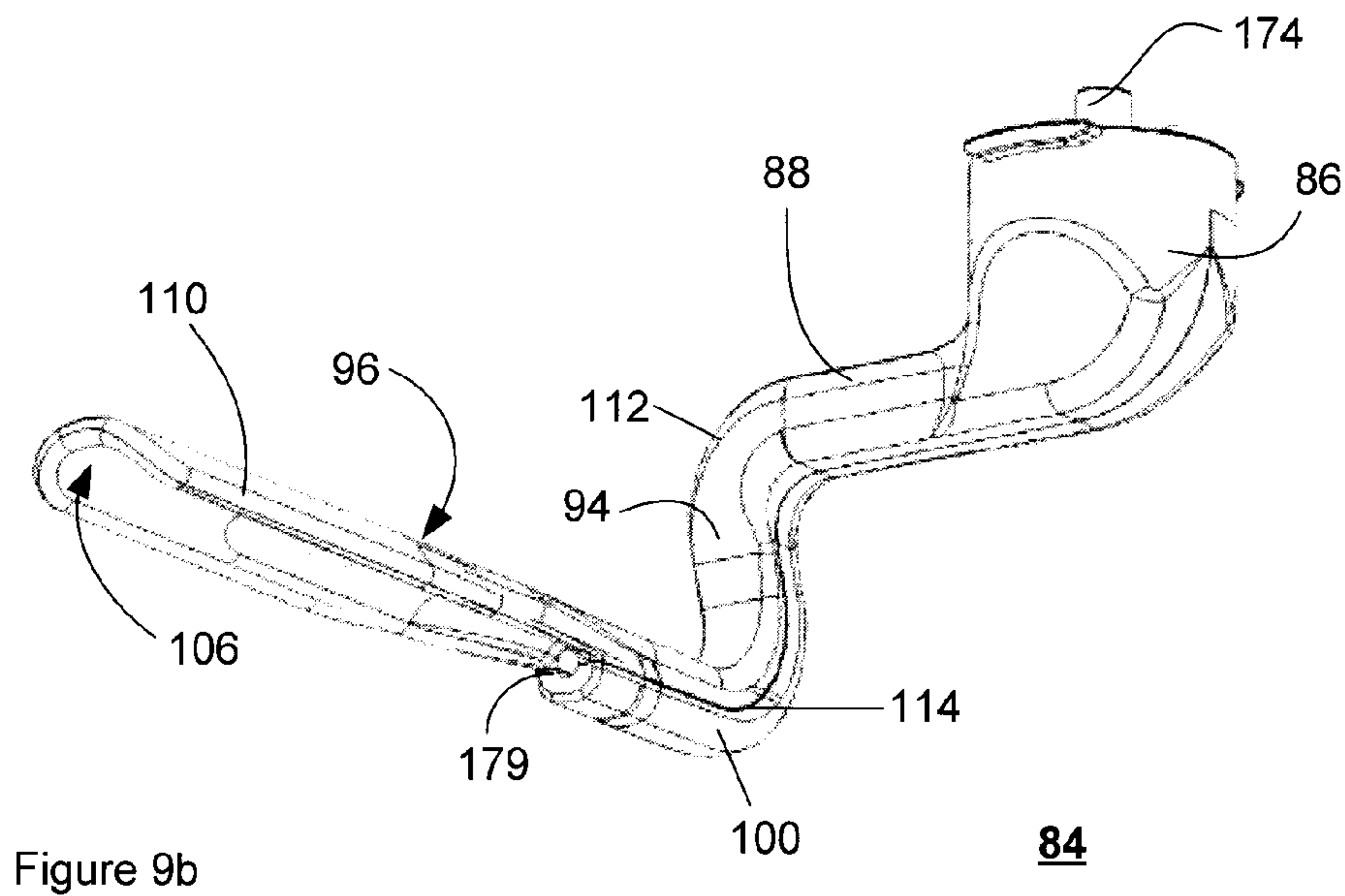
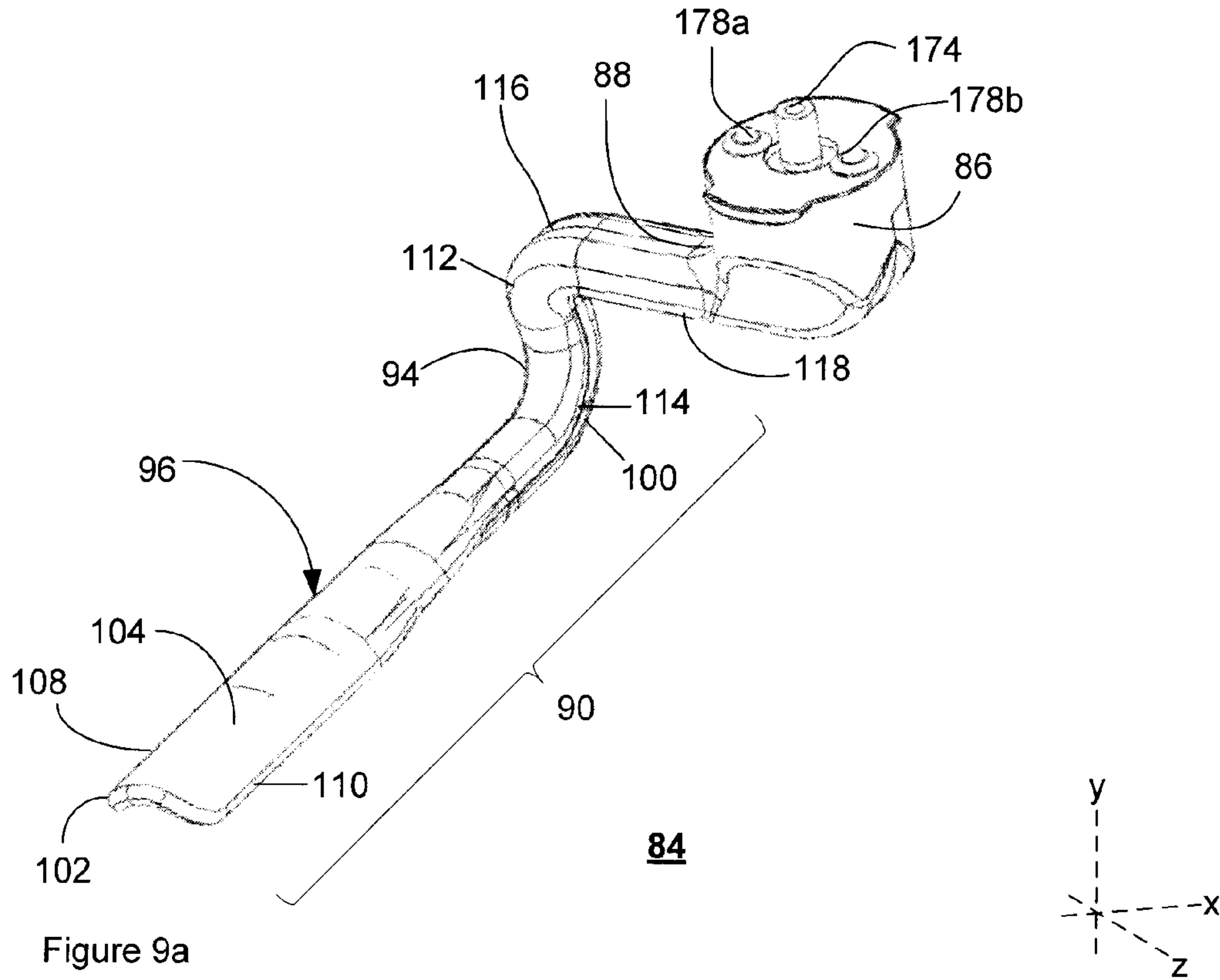


Figure 8f



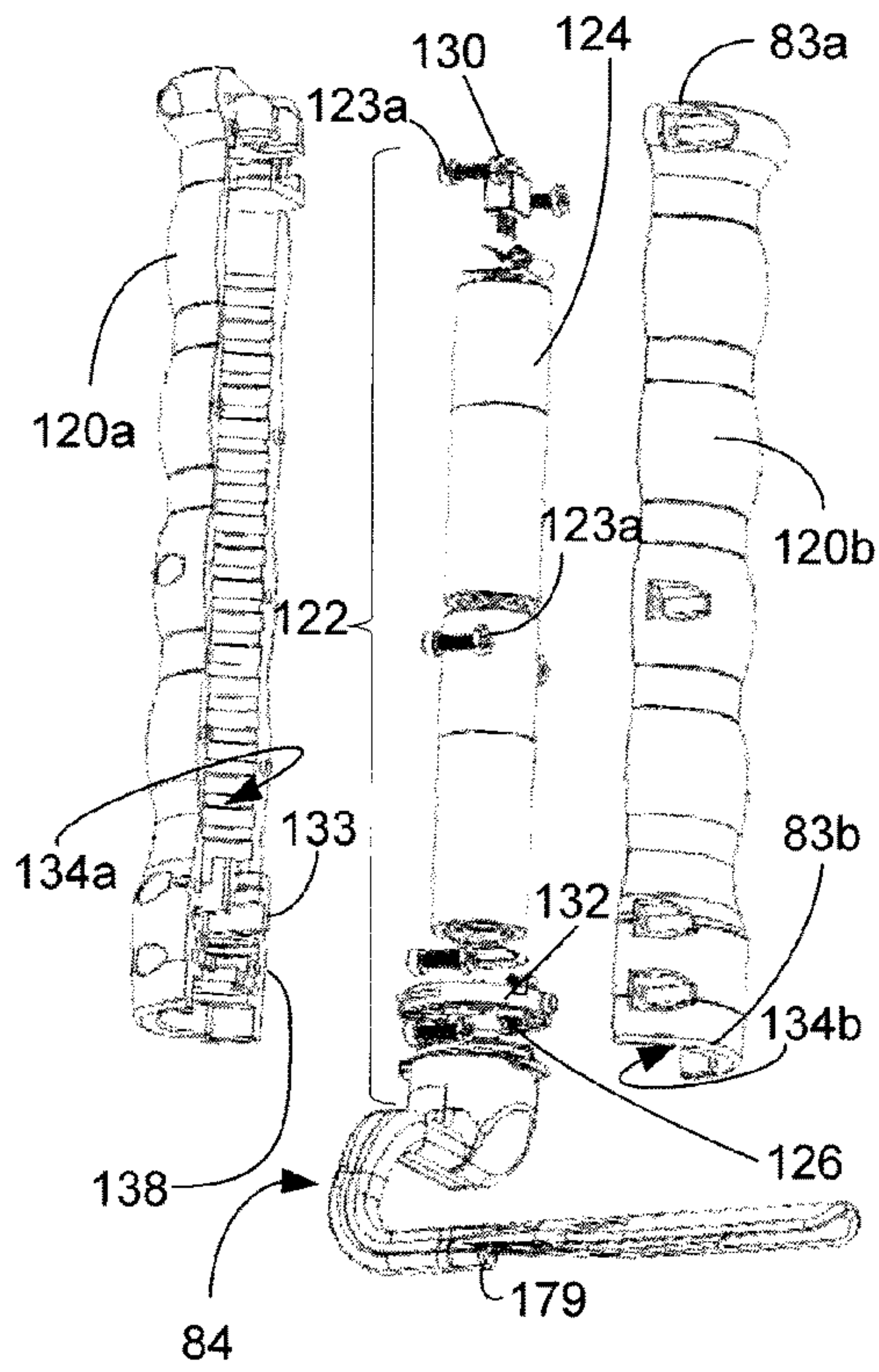


Figure 10

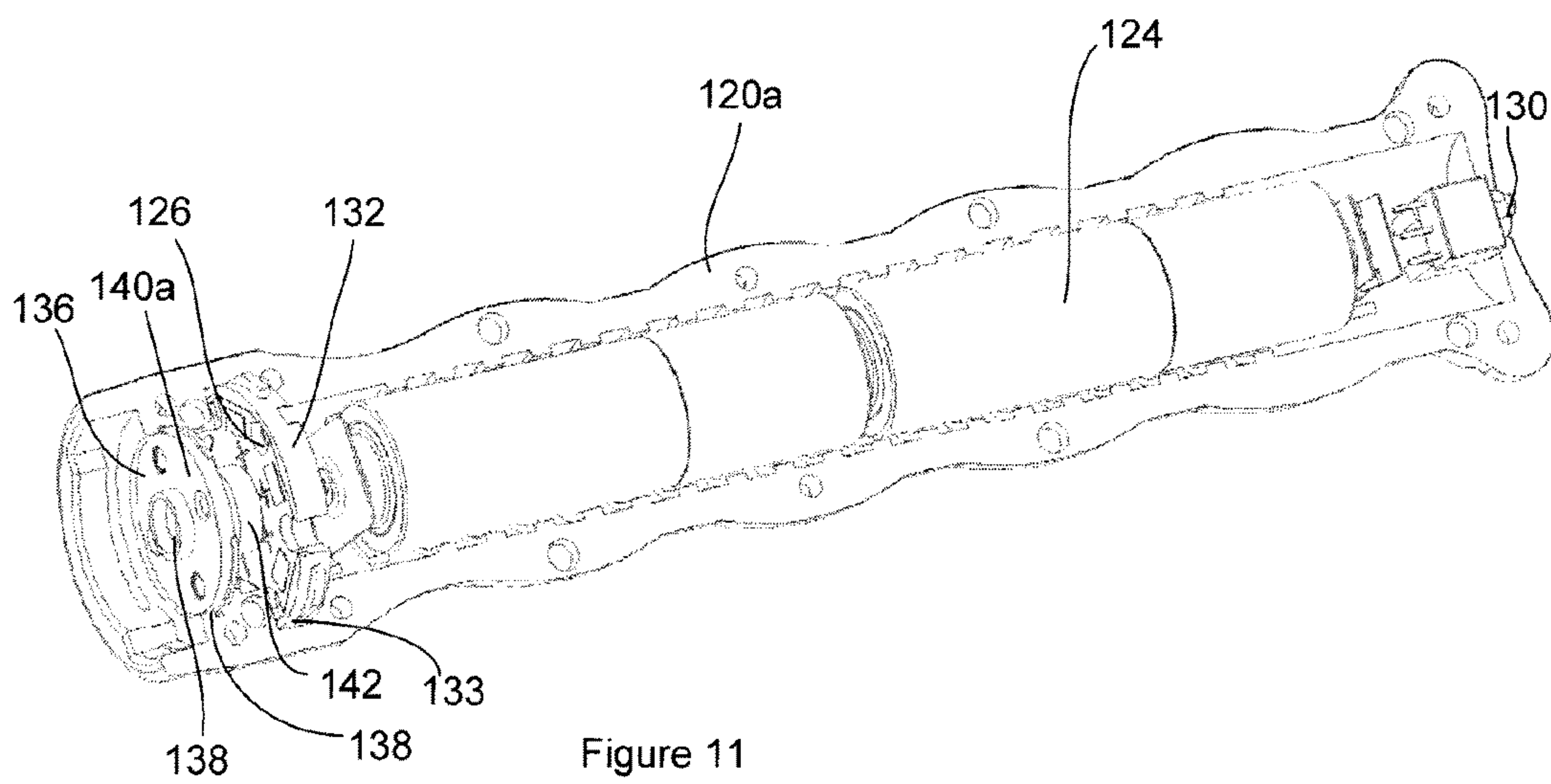


Figure 11

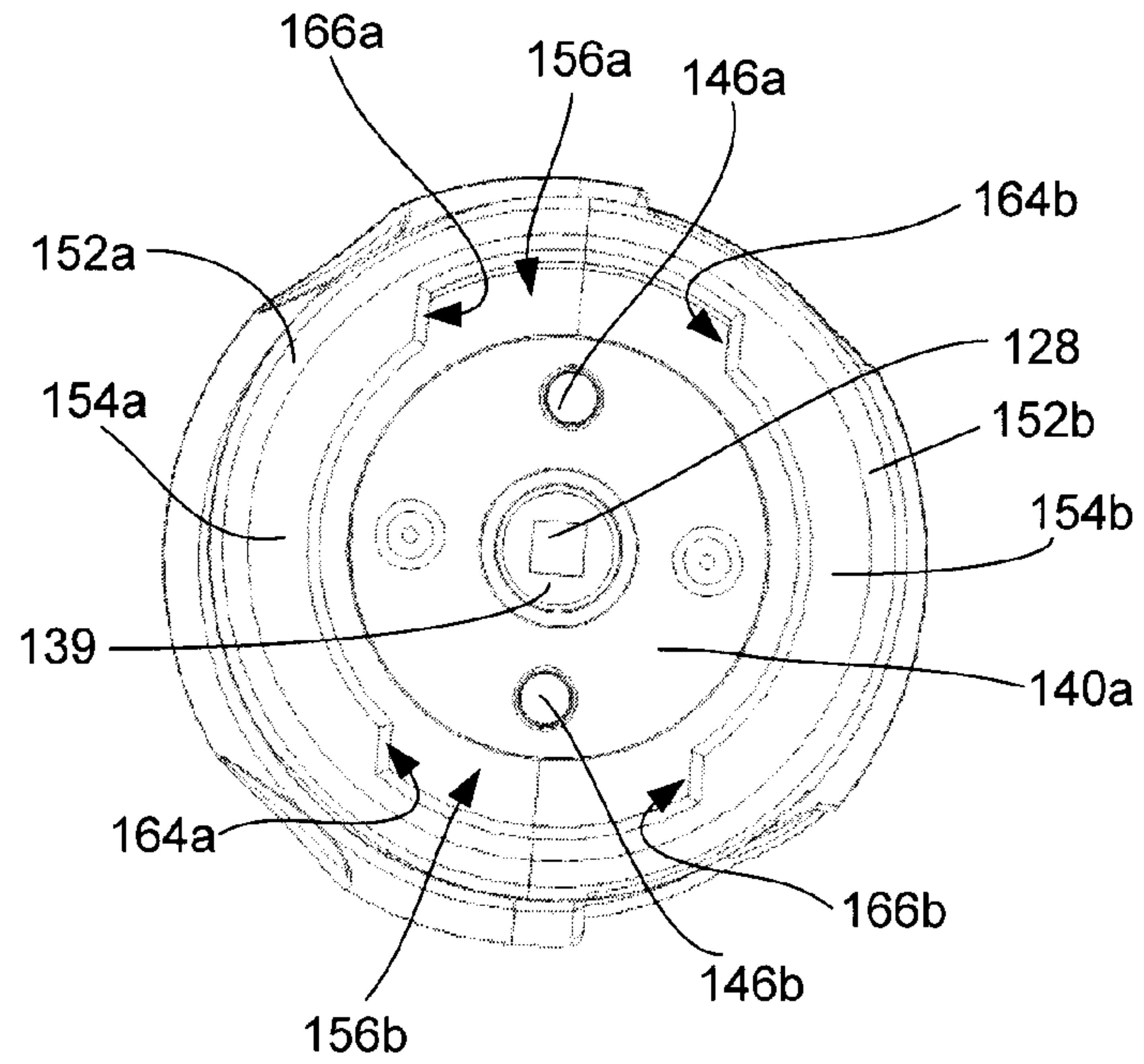


Figure 12a

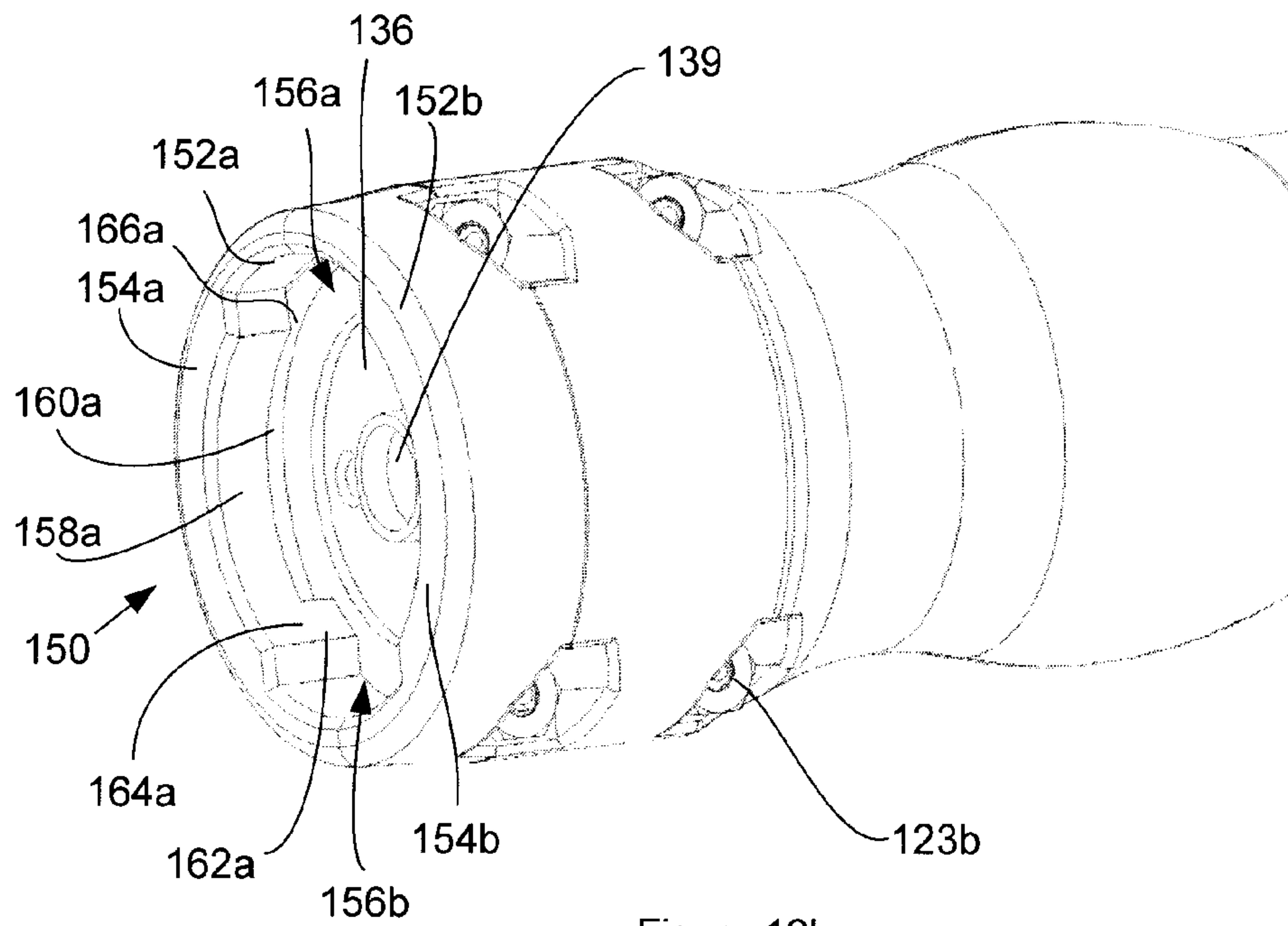


Figure 12b

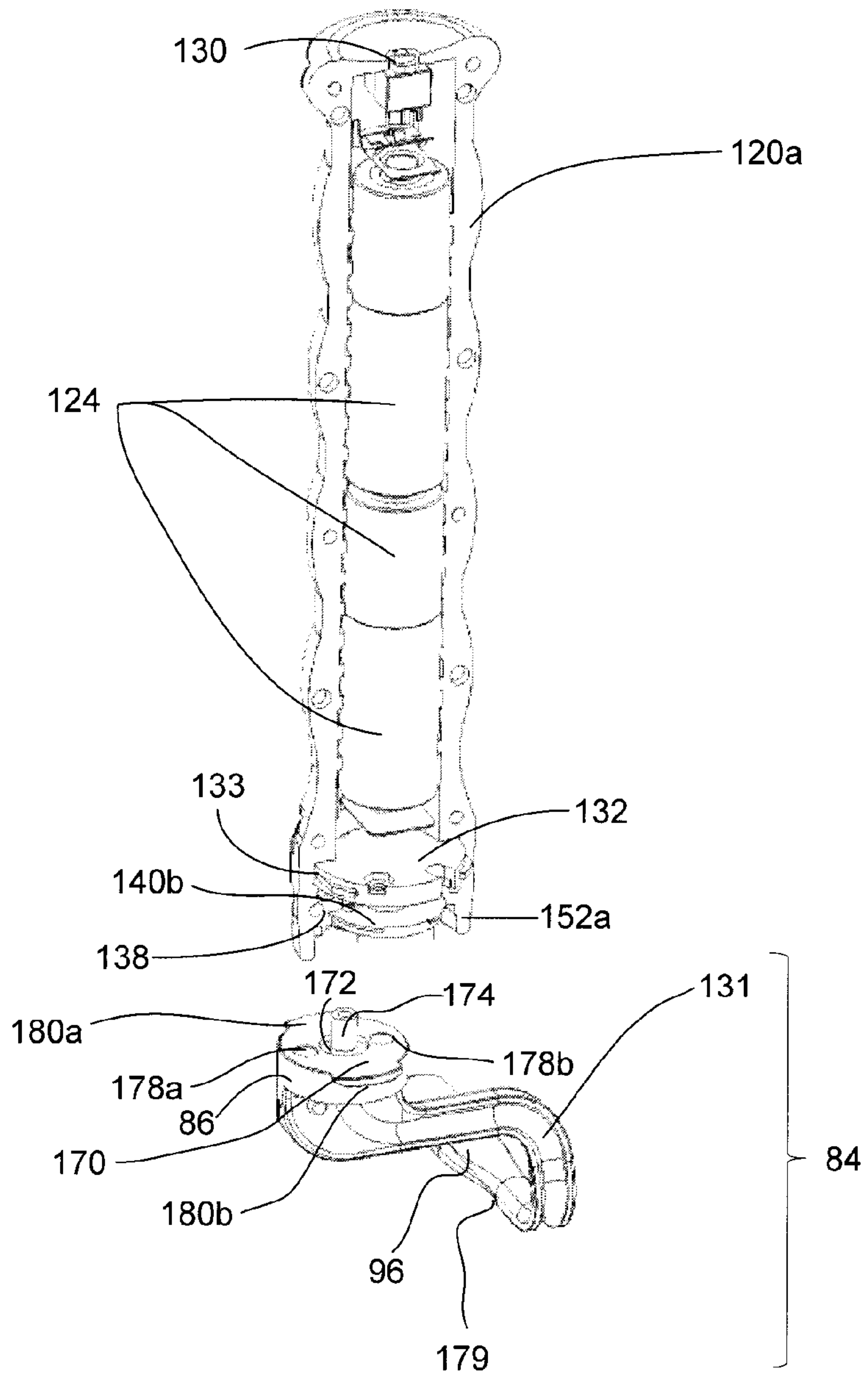


Figure 13

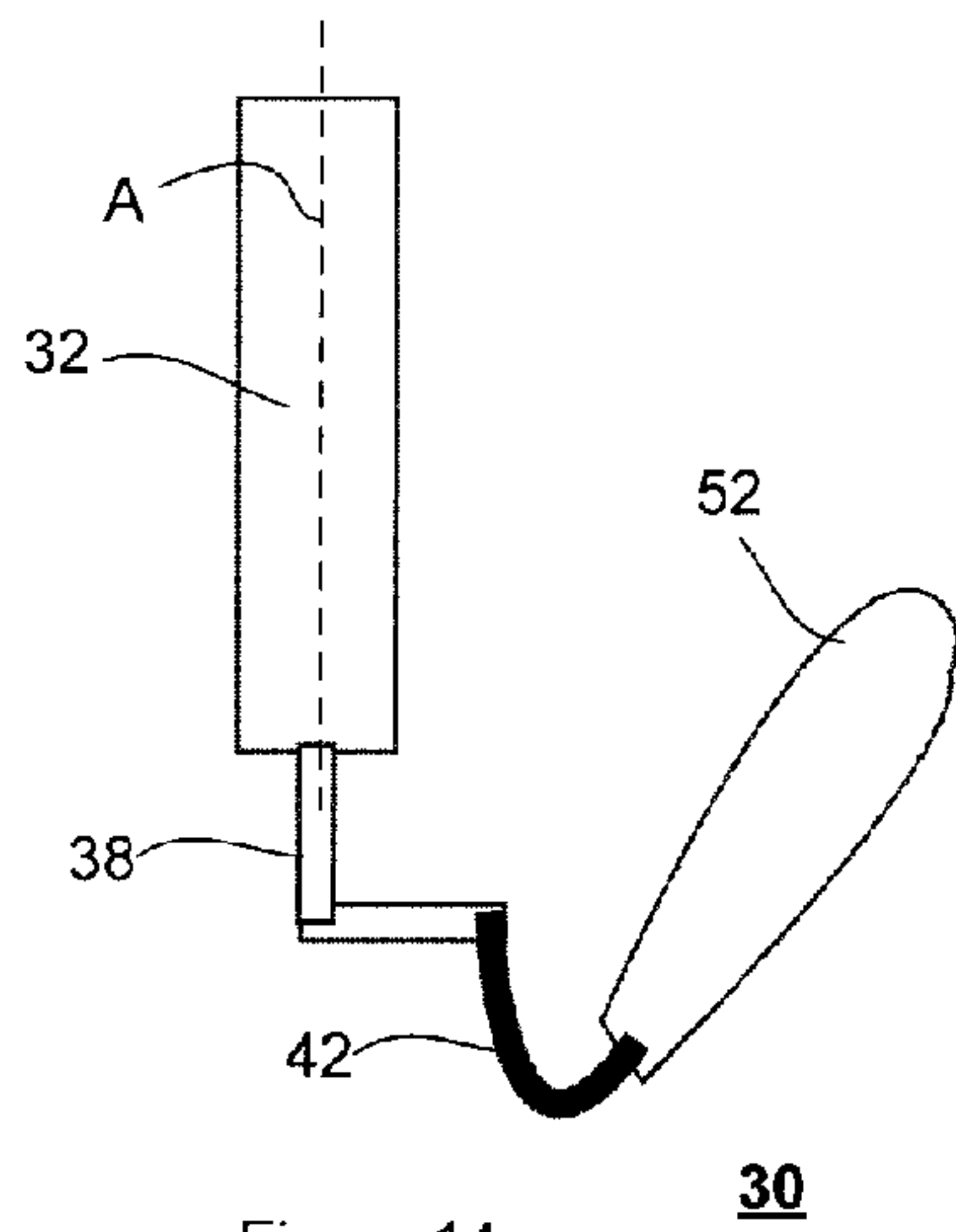


Figure 14a

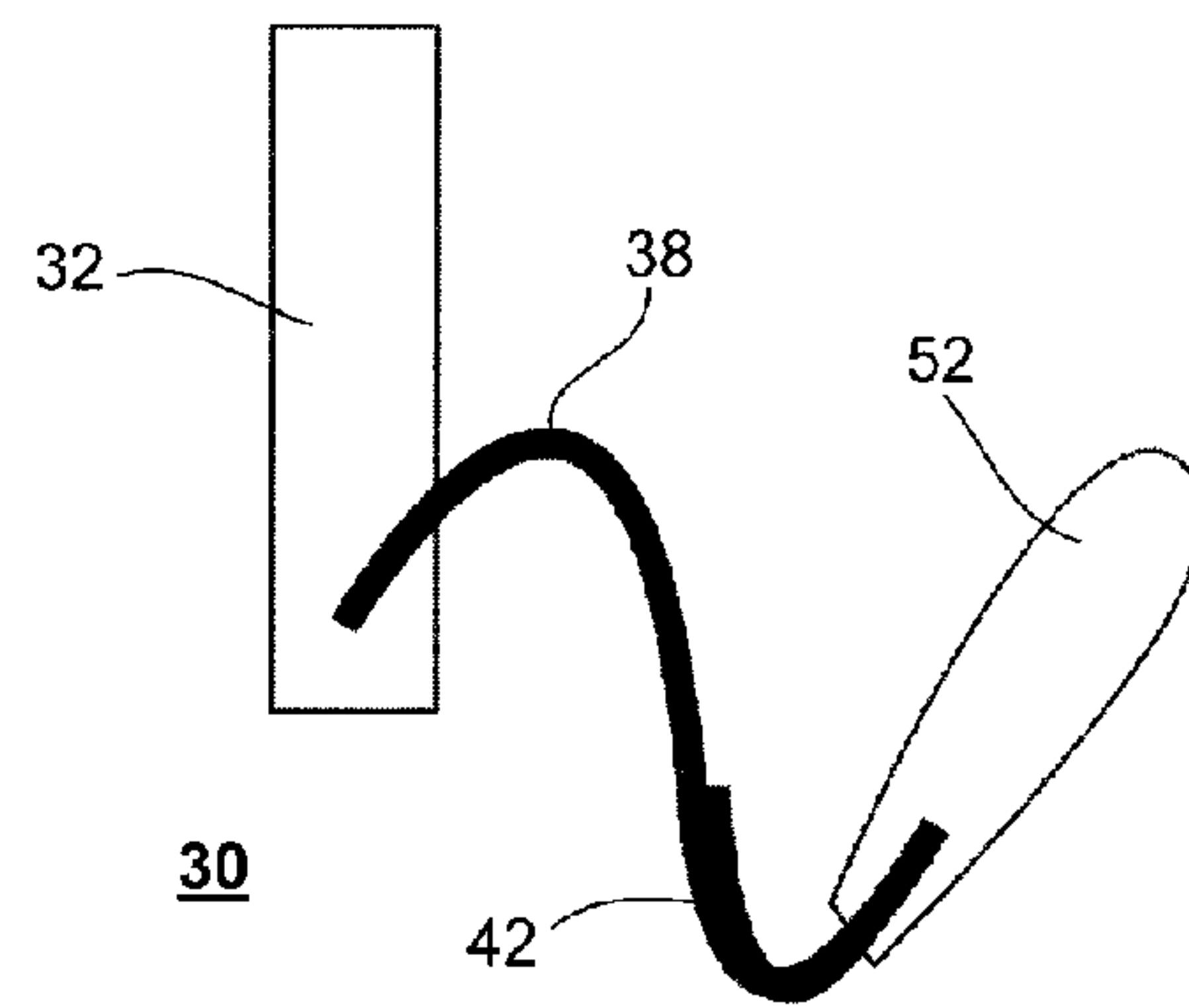


Figure 14c

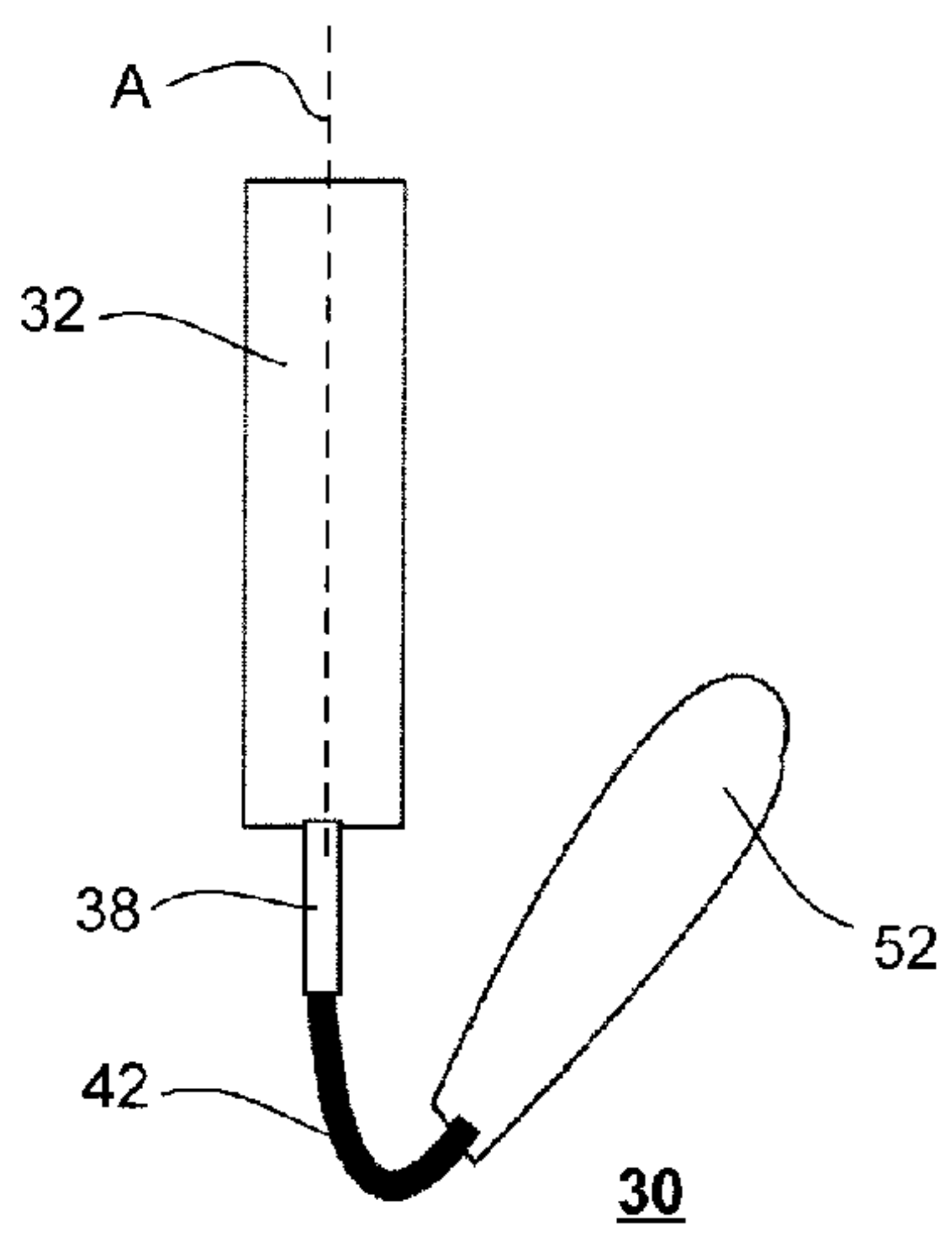


Figure 14b

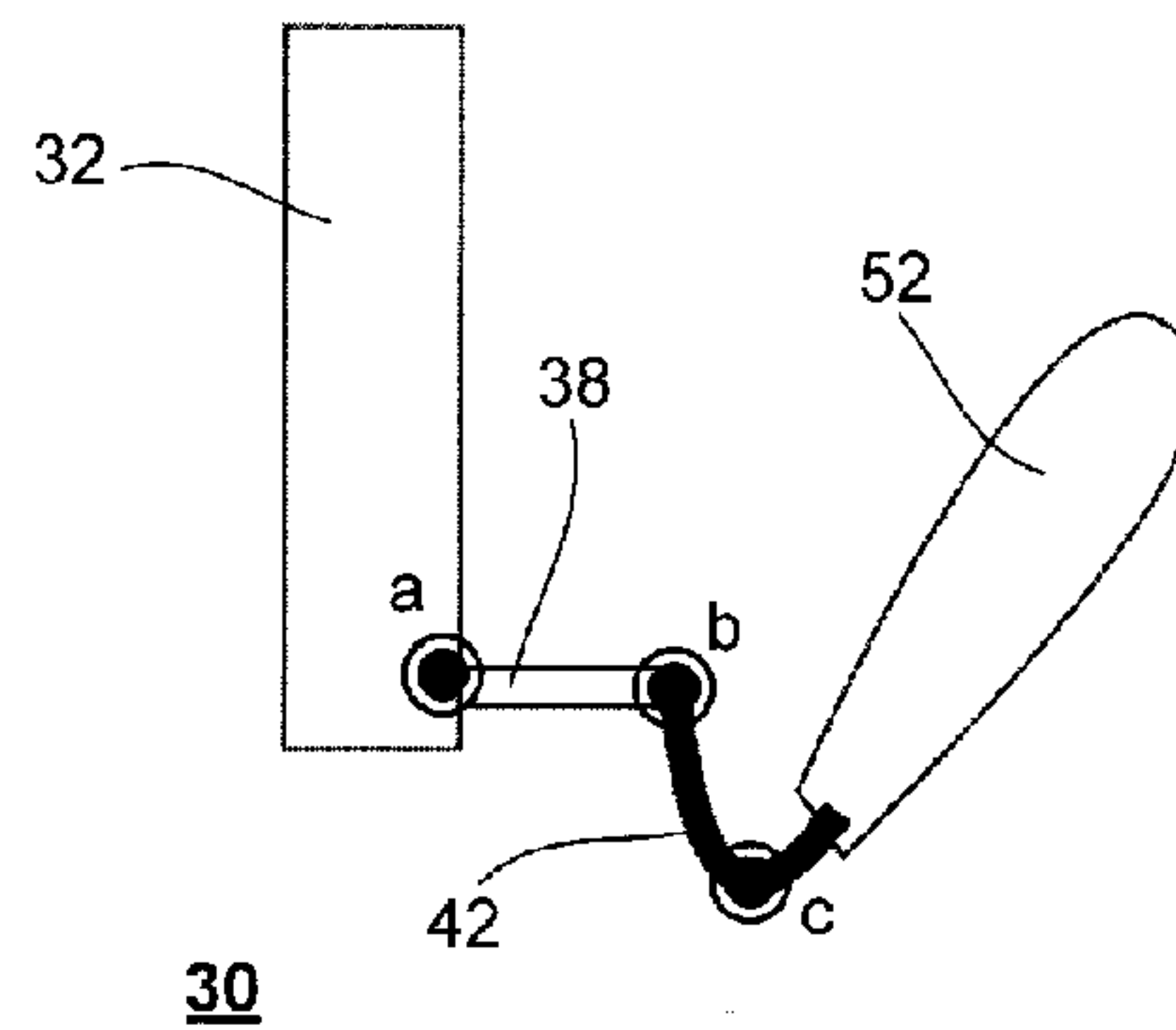


Figure 14d

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PEDIATRIC LARYNGOSCOPE, AND METHOD OF USE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to endotracheal intubation instruments, more particularly it relates to a laryngoscope.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

Laryngoscopes are well known in the art, and are used to visualize the larynx for proper diagnosis of laryngeal disorders, such as, vocal cord paralysis. They are also used to assist with the placement of a tube from a ventilator machine into a patient's trachea to aid with the oxygenation of the patient, a procedure commonly referred to as endotracheal intubation. Oftentimes, endotracheal intubation is performed pre-emptively to avoid serious emergencies in situations which may result in cessation of breathing unexpectedly, such as brain injury, brain infection, sepsis, serious multi-trauma, and metabolic derangement. In such emergency situations, the proper positioning of the laryngoscope and placement of the tube must be performed in a quick and safe manner.

Over the years, it has become common to intubate infants, especially neonates or premature newborns, and children in order to provide enhanced life support. While the market is awash with prior art pediatric laryngoscopes, these laryngoscopes are merely scaled-down versions of adult laryngoscopes, and are therefore not designed specifically for neonatal use. A typical prior art laryngoscope includes either a straight or curved blade which facilitates visualization of the patient's vocal cords which are used for locating the patient's larynx and subsequently the trachea. FIG. 1 shows one such prior art pediatric laryngoscope **10**, in its normal operative downwardly directed position. Pediatric laryngoscope **10** includes a handle **12** extending upward and a curved tubular blade **14**, which are disengagably connectable with one another. At its proximal end **16**, the relatively large blade **14** is provided with blade mount **18** with a hinge which permits blade **14** to be releasably secured to the handle **14** via hinge lock **20** disposed at one end of the handle **14**. Blade **14** is relatively thick and includes a curved longitudinal or lateral web **22** extending from the blade mount **18** for suppressing a patient's tongue, such that a distal end **23** of blade **14** exposes the larynx. While these attributes and features are useful or essential in adult laryngoscopes, these features may be non-essential or ill-suited for pediatric applications. For example, in an adult laryngoscope, bulky hinge lock **20** is designed to have a locking system that remains stable with the weight of adult head and counter weight applied by the operator. Since adults and older children have sufficiently large mouths and the bulky nature of the hinge lock **20** of an adult laryngoscope is not a great issue. However, when used with pediatric patients **24**, such as neonates, particularly preterm newborns, with relatively small mouths, then the blade mount **18** and bulky hinge lock **20** occupy a substantial portion of mouth **26**, as can be seen in FIG. 2.

It is evident that when used on a pediatric patient **24**, blade mount **18** and bulky hinge lock **20** appear directly in the line of sight of the operator, and therefore substantially obstructs the view of the larynx. Also, while the lateral web **22** of blade **14** is useful for suppressing an adult patient's tongue to prevent the tongue from encroaching into the line of sight, in a premature newborn with a relatively small mouth, the lateral web **22** with its relatively large footprint further

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contributes to a decrease in the area of vision. Additionally, the overall structure of the blade **14** often results in the requirement of intensive pressure to move the anatomical structures to expose the larynx. In exerting the required pressure, the operator is sometimes forced to pry against the patient's upper teeth, thereby increasing the possibility of damage to the teeth, gums, lips, and jaw, which is undesirable, especially in pediatric patients **24**. Generally, use of the prior art laryngoscope requires extensive training, for example, proper positioning of the blade **14** requires a series of manoeuvres of the operator's shoulder, which may place the operator in awkward, and non-ergonomic positions, and may be tiresome in certain challenging emergency cases.

It is an object of the present invention to mitigate or obviate at least one of the above-mentioned disadvantages.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In one of its aspects, there is provided a laryngoscope assembly having:

- a handle;
- an offset member having a first end coupled to said handle; and
- a blade coupled to a second end of said offset member;

and

wherein said offset member is orthogonal to said handle and said blade, and disposes said blade away from said handle to increase visibility within a buccal cavity of a patient by placing said handle away from a line of sight of an operator when blade is placed in the buccal cavity.

In another of its aspects, there is provided a laryngoscope assembly having:

- a handle;
 - an offset member having one end coupled to said handle;
- and
- a blade coupled to another end of said offset member.

In another of its aspects, there is provided a laryngoscope blade assembly having:

- a blade mount removably attached to a handle;
 - an offset member extending from said blade mount;
 - a blade comprising an intra-oral portion and an extra-oral blade portion;
- and

wherein blade mount comprises a first longitudinal axis, offset member comprises a second longitudinal axis, said extra-oral blade portion comprises a third longitudinal axis, and said intra-oral blade portion comprises a fourth longitudinal axis, such that said second longitudinal axis of said offset member is orthogonal to said first longitudinal axis of said blade mount and said third longitudinal axis of said extra-oral blade portion, and said fourth longitudinal axis of said intra-oral blade portion is orthogonal to said third longitudinal axis of said extra-oral blade portion.

In another of its aspects, there is provided a method of performing laryngoscopy comprising the steps of:

providing a laryngoscope having a handle, an offset member and a blade;

said offset member having a proximal end coupled to said handle via blade mount and a proximal end coupled to a blade, said blade comprising a curved extra-oral blade portion and an intra-oral blade portion; wherein blade mount comprises a first longitudinal axis, said offset member comprises a second longitudinal axis, said extra-oral blade portion comprises a third longitudinal axis, and said intra-oral blade portion comprises a fourth longitudinal axis, such that said second longitudinal axis of offset member is orthogonal to said first longitudinal axis of said blade mount

and third longitudinal axis of said extra-oral blade portion, and said fourth longitudinal axis of said intra-oral blade portion is orthogonal to said third longitudinal axis of said extra-oral blade portion;

holding said handle in one hand and inserting said intra-oral blade portion into an open buccal cavity of a patient in a supine position, with said curved extra-oral blade portion over a lip of said patient;

positioning said intra-oral blade portion for laryngeal exposure; and

whereby said offset member disposes said blade away from said blade mount to increase visibility within said buccal cavity by placing said handle away from a line of sight when said blade is placed in the buccal cavity to provide a substantially unobstructed view within said buccal cavity for said laryngeal exposure.

Advantageously, the laryngoscope optimizes laryngeal exposure, and therefore facilitates endotracheal intubation, especially in a neonate, and substantially diminishes the likelihood of trauma to the surrounding oral structures during intubation, thereby enhancing safety. In addition, the laryngoscope is intuitive and therefore can be used easily without additional training.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Several exemplary embodiments of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the appended drawings in which:

FIG. 1 shows a prior art laryngoscope;

FIG. 2 shows the prior art laryngoscope of FIG. 1 in use;

FIG. 3 shows a perspective view of a laryngoscope, in one exemplary embodiment;

FIG. 4 shows an exploded view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 5a shows a side view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 5b shows a back view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 5c shows a front view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 5d shows a top view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 5e shows a bottom view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 5f shows a perspective view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 6 shows a schematic diagram of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 7 shows the laryngoscope in use;

FIG. 8a shows a perspective view of a laryngoscope, in another exemplary embodiment;

FIG. 8b shows a front view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 8c shows a back view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 8d shows a side view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 8e shows a bottom view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 8f shows a top view of the laryngoscope;

FIGS. 9a to 9b show various views of a head-sub assembly of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 10 shows an exploded view of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 11 shows a cut-away view of a handle of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 12a shows a front view of an opening of a handle of the laryngoscope;

FIG. 12b shows a perspective view of the opening of the handle;

FIG. 13 shows a cut-away view of the handle and the head-sub assembly; and

FIGS. 14a to 14d show views of a laryngoscope, in another exemplary embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

The detailed description of exemplary embodiments of the invention herein makes reference to the accompanying

block diagrams and schematic diagrams, which show the exemplary embodiment by way of illustration and its best mode. While these exemplary embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention, it should be understood that other embodiments may be realized and that logical and mechanical changes may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Thus, the detailed description herein is presented for purposes of illustration only and not of limitation. For example, the steps recited in any of the method or process descriptions may be executed in any order and are not limited to the order presented.

Moreover, it should be appreciated that the particular implementations shown and described herein are illustrative of the invention and its best mode and are not intended to otherwise limit the scope of the present invention in any way. Indeed, for the sake of brevity, certain sub-components of the individual operating components and other functional aspects of the systems may not be described in detail herein. Furthermore, the connecting lines shown in the various figures contained herein are intended to represent exemplary functional relationships and/or physical couplings between the various elements. It should be noted that many alternative or additional functional relationships or physical connections may be present in a practical system.

Looking at FIGS. 3, 4 and 5a to 5f, there is shown a laryngoscope assembly, generally designated by the numeral 30, in one exemplary embodiment. Laryngoscope assembly 30 may be used in pediatric patients, and comprises a handle 32 having a longitudinal axis A, and an interchangeable laryngoscope blade 36 attached thereto via an offset member 38. Accordingly, one end 40 of the offset member 38 includes an extra-oral blade portion 42, and other end 44 includes a blade mount 46 removably attached to handle 32 via a fastening mechanism 47, such as threaded engagement (as shown in FIG. 4), or coaxial engagements, tab and slot engagement (as shown in FIG. 6) or friction fit. The extra-oral blade portion 42 has a proximal portion 48 joined to end 40 of the offset member 38, and a distal portion 50. The extra-oral blade portion 42 is curved between proximal portion 48 and distal portion 50, and has a predetermined radius of curvature which defines an angle that conforms to the oral anatomy of the patient, as will be described later. Unitarily extending from distal portion 50 of arcuate extra-oral blade portion 42 is intra-oral blade portion 52 having a longitudinal body with a proximal end 54 and a distal tip 56, and laterally straight therebetween. Alternatively, intra-oral blade portion 52 is curved between the longitudinal edges thereof.

Preferably offset member 38 includes a relatively small cross-sectional area and a minimal footprint to increase visibility of the interior of a buccal cavity of the patient. Offset member 38 includes a rectangular cross-section in a plane orthogonal to handle 32 along the entire length of offset member 38. Alternatively, offset member 38 includes a cylindrical cross-section.

The intra-oral blade portion 52 comprises an elongate body that is generally flat with an upper surface 58 and an opposite lower surface 60. The offset member 38, extra-oral blade portion 42 and intra-oral blade portion 52 may be integrally formed. Accordingly, a unitary component formed of these elements 38, 42, and 52 results in fewer crevices that may trap contaminants, and therefore facilitates cleaning and sterilization.

Housed within the mount 46 is an illumination system 62 which provides light within the buccal cavity when intra-oral portion 52 is placed therein. Illumination system 62 is

electrically coupled to a power source 64 for energizing light source 66 and activated by switch 68, as shown in FIG. 6. Preferably, power source 64 is included with handle 32, and may include one or batteries (not shown) and associated power circuitry (not shown). Light source 66 may be an LED, and may include a light guide 69 to irradiate a portion of blade 36, such as the intra-oral portion 52, or irradiate a region adjacent to distal tip 56 of the intra-oral portion 52. Accordingly, a suitable bore to receive the light guide 69 may be formed within offset member 38, extra-oral blade portion 42 and intra-oral blade portion 52. Alternatively, light source 66 may be disposed adjacent to distal tip 56.

In operation, as shown in FIG. 7, pediatric patient 70 lies supine on an operating table and the operator is positioned adjacent to the head of pediatric patient 70 for an overhead view. After proper positioning of the patient 70, the patient's buccal cavity 72 is opened, in neonates 70 this action may be accomplished by a scissor technique involving the operator's thumb and middle finger of one hand. With the other hand, the operator holds the laryngoscope 30 by handle 32 and positions intra-oral blade portion 52 inside the patient's buccal cavity 72. Offset member 38 places handle 32 at a sufficient distance away from blade 36 such that handle 32 does not obstruct the line of sight of the operator when blade 36 is inserted in the buccal cavity 72.

With the intra-oral blade portion 52 in the operating position, a light switch 68 is operated to energize light source 66 and the light emitted by the light source 66 is directed to a light guide 69 which transmits the light to the distal tip 56 of the intra-oral blade portion 52 to focus the light for optimal laryngeal exposure. Alternatively, intra-oral blade portion 52 may be formed of a translucent material such that light is also emitted along the length of the light guide 69.

A portion of the offset member 38 adjacent end 40 is caused to rest substantially below bottom lip 74 of the patient 70, while the arcuate extra-oral blade portion 42 abuts an upper surface of bottom lip 74. Using a wrist motion, the operator causes the upper surface 58 of the intra-oral blade portion 52, to push on the tongue, to place the tongue out of the line of sight. Since the arcuate extra-oral blade portion 42 curves around the bottom lip 74 and bottom teeth, extensive force is not required to use the laryngoscope 30, and therefore excessive force is not exerted on the bottom lip 74 and bottom teeth, which would otherwise cause trauma thereto. Meanwhile, the distal tip 56 of the intra-oral blade portion 52 pushes on the base of the epiglottis to move the epiglottis out of the line of sight and to thereby expose the larynx.

As can be seen in FIG. 7, the blade 36 is disposed away from upper lip 76 and upper teeth of the patient 70, thereby substantially minimizing or eliminating any possible trauma thereto, common with prior art pediatric laryngoscopes. Therefore, visibility within the buccal cavity 72 of a neonate patient 70 is greatly improved by providing a blade 36 having a minimal footprint and by the positioning of the handle 32 and blade mount 46 away from the blade 36 via offset member 38.

Advantageously, laryngoscopy procedures in which laryngoscope 30 is used are substantially faster and easier to perform than procedures employing prior art pediatric laryngoscopes, and require no extra training or retraining. Consequently, higher laryngoscopy success rates are achievable, especially in emergency situations, which translates to increased operator satisfaction, and minimal discomfort for the neonate patients 70.

FIGS. 8a to 8e show various views of laryngoscope 80, in another exemplary embodiment. Laryngoscope 80 may be used in pediatric patients, and includes handle 82 with top end 83a and bottom end 83b attached to a head sub-assembly 84 comprising blade mount 86, offset member 88 and laryngoscope blade 90. Blade mount 86 is removably attached to handle 82 via a fastening mechanism 92 (not shown), and laryngoscope blade 90 is attached thereto via offset member 88, such that head sub-assembly 84 may be interchangeable to allow a variety of blades 90 of different dimensions to be used. Laryngoscope blade 90 is formed of an extra-oral blade portion 94, and intra-oral blade portion 96. Generally, handle 82, as well as blade mount 86, includes a longitudinal axis A along a y-axis, offset member 88 includes a longitudinal axis B along an x-axis, extra-oral blade portion 94 includes a longitudinal axis C parallel to the y-axis, and intra-oral blade portion 96 includes a longitudinal axis D parallel to a z-axis.

FIGS. 9a to 9b show various views of the head sub-assembly 84 of laryngoscope 80. Laryngoscope blade 90 comprises longitudinally extending intra-oral blade portion 96 with proximal end 100, distal end 102, a palatal (or upper) surface 104, lingual (or lower) surface 106, and a pair of opposed longitudinal edges 108 and 110. Palatal surface 104 and lingual surface 106 are non-planar, such that the longitudinal body of intra-oral blade portion 96 is curved between longitudinal edges 108 and 110, or substantially concave. The curvature of the intra-oral blade body portion 96 and "spooned tip" of distal end 102 generally fits the contour of the oropharynx of a patient, in operation.

Extra-oral blade portion 94 includes a longitudinally extending body with first end 112 and second end 114. As can be best illustrated in FIG. 9b, second end 114 is integrally formed with proximal end 100 of intra-oral portion 96, such that the longitudinal axis C of extra-oral blade portion 94 forms an angle of approximately 90 degrees with the longitudinal axis D of intra-oral portion 96. Accordingly, handle 82 and extra-oral portion 94 are generally parallel to one another.

Offset member 88 includes a longitudinally extending body with blade end 116 and mount end 118. Blade end 116 is integrally formed with first end 112 of extra-oral portion 94, such that the longitudinal axis B of offset member 88 forms an angle of approximately 90 degrees with the longitudinal axis C of extra-oral portion 94. Mount end 118 of offset member 88 is integrally formed with blade mount 86, and longitudinal axis B of offset member 88 forms an angle of approximately 90 degrees with the longitudinal axis A of blade mount 86. Blade mount 86 is removably attached to bottom end 83b of the handle 82 via fastening mechanism, and locked thereto while in operation, as will be described later.

FIG. 10 shows an exploded view of a laryngoscope 80. Handle 82 is composed of two complementary shells 120a, 120b which form a cavity for housing an illumination system 122 for providing light to the buccal cavity of a patient. As can be seen in greater detail in FIG. 11, the illumination system 122 comprises a power supply, such as batteries 124, a printed circuit board (PCB) 126 having power circuitry electrically coupled to a light source, such as an LED 128, via a switch 130, and a light guide 131. PCB 126 is secured to PCB holder 132 which is received in a circumferential channel 133 within an interior wall 134a, 134b (not shown) of shells 120a, 120b, respectively. Detent plate 136 is received in a circumferential channel 138 within interior walls 134a and 134b adjacent to bottom end 83b. Detent plate 136 includes an aperture 139 extending

between two opposed surfaces **140a**, **140b**, thereof. Gasket light block **142** having a channel **144** (not shown) abuts surface **140b** of detent plate **136** and PCB **126** such that LED **128** is received within channel **144**, or LED **128** is positioned adjacent to channel **144** such that light from LED **128** is received and guided by channel **144**.

As can be seen in FIGS. **12a** and **12b**, detent plate **136** also includes apertures **146a**, **146b** facing opening **150** adjacent to bottom end **83b** of handle **82**. Walls **152a**, **152b** extending from about circumferential channel **138** include opposed flanges **154a**, **154b** with gaps **156a**, **156b** therebetween. Below each of the flanges **154a**, **154b**, is a shoulder **158a**, **158b** (not shown) which defines a passageway **160a**, **160b**, between shoulders **158a**, **158b** and detent plate **136**. Each of the shoulders **158a**, **158b** include an arm **162a**, **162b** at one end **164a**, **164b** formed therewith and extending to abut detent plate **136**, such that the passageways **160a**, **160b** may only be accessed via open end **166a**, **166b** of passageways **160a**, **160b**, respectively.

As can be seen in FIG. **13**, blade mount **86** includes a mounting plate **170** with an orifice **172** having one end **174** of a light guide **131** extending therethrough, and detents **178a**, **178b**. Light guide **131** is formed within blade mount **86**, offset member **88**, extra-oral portion **94**, and intra-oral portion **96**. Other end **179** is located on lingual (or lower) surface **106**, adjacent to proximal end **100** of intra-oral portion **96**. Mounting plate **170** is dimensioned to fit into opening **150**, and includes opposed tabs **180a**, **180b**. In order to secure blade assembly **90** to the handle **82**, opposed tabs **180a**, **180b** are introduced into gaps **156a**, **156b**, and end **174** of light guide **131** engages circumferential channel **138** in detent plate **136**. Blade assembly **90** is advanced towards detent plate **136** such that mounting plate **170** is in close proximity with detent plate **136**, and detents **178a**, **178b** abut detent plate **136**. A force is applied to head sub-assembly **84** to cause rotation thereof in one direction, such that opposed tabs **180a**, **180b** enter passageways **160a**, **160b** via open ends **166a**, **166b** and are caused to travel along passageways **160a**, **160b**. The force is applied until opposed tabs **180a**, **180b** abut arms **162a**, **162b**, and detents **178a**, **178b** are received by apertures **146a**, **146b**, thereby locking the head sub-assembly **84** to the handle **82**. In order to remove the blade assembly **90** from the handle **82**, a force in the opposite direction is applied, and detents **178a**, **178b** escape apertures **146a**, **146b**, and the opposed tabs **180a**, **180b** are caused to travel along passageways **160a**, **160b** towards open ends **166a**, **166b**, and opposed tabs **180a**, **180b** are extricated from opening **150** via gaps **156a**, **156b**, while end **174** of light guide **131** exits circumferential channel **139** in detent plate **136**. As such, fastening mechanism **92** comprises features of detent plate **136**, opening **150** and mounting plate **170** and allows the head sub-assembly **84** to be removably coupled to the handle **82**.

Accordingly, when illumination system **122** is enabled via switch **130**, light from LED **128** is guided via channel **144** of gasket light block **142** to end **174** of light guide **131** within circumferential channel **139** of detent plate **136**, and via the length of light guide **131** to exit at end **179** on lingual (or lower) surface **106**, and further guided towards distal end **102** of the blade **90**, and into the buccal cavity.

In another embodiment, intra-oral blade portion **52**, or **96** comprises a "C" cross-sectional shape. It should be understood other blade geometries may be used with embodiments of the laryngoscope **30**, or **80**.

In another embodiment, laryngoscope blade **36**, or **90** is unitary with the handle **32**, or **82**, or may be attached to the handle **32**, or **82** via suitable engagements between these

components as would be recognized by one of ordinary skill in the art, such as ultrasonic welding, among others.

In yet another embodiment, offset member **38**, or **88** is L-shaped, with one portion extending from one end of handle **32**, or **82** along the longitudinal axis A of handle **32**, or **82**, and an orthogonal portion coupled to the extra-oral blade portion **42**, or **94** at one end, as shown FIG. **14a**.

In yet another embodiment, offset member **38**, or **88** extends from one end of handle **32**, or **82** along the longitudinal axis A of handle **32**, or **82**, as shown in FIG. **14b**.

In yet another embodiment, offset member **38**, or **88** is curved, and extends from a wall of handle **32**, or **82**, as shown in FIG. **14c**.

In yet another embodiment, offset member **38**, or **88** is hingedly connected to handle **32**, or **82** which facilitates pivotal movement of offset member **38**, or **88** with respect to handle **32** or **82**.

In yet another embodiment, handle **32**, or **82**, offset member **38**, or **88**, extra-oral blade portion **42** or **94**, and intra-oral blade portion **52**, or **96** are hingedly connected to each other at points a, b, c, for placing and locking the laryngoscope blade **36**, or **90** in a plurality of positions to suit the operator and the patient, as shown in FIG. **14d**.

In yet another embodiment, offset member **38**, or **88** is extensible.

In yet another embodiment, laryngoscope **30** or **80** further includes a blade sheath, which may be disposable, or reusable and autoclavable. Similarly, handle **32**, or **82** may also include a disposable, or a reusable and autoclavable handle sheath.

In yet another embodiment, laryngoscope **30** or **80** includes a viewing member cooperating with illumination system **62**, or **122** to provide for remote viewing at distal tip **56**, or **102** using a suitable eyepiece.

In yet another embodiment, laryngoscope **30** or **80** includes a camera mounted adjacent to distal tip **56**, or **102** of intra-oral blade portion **52** or **96** for capturing images within the buccal cavity **72**. The captured data may be transmitted via a wired connection or wirelessly for storage on a computer-readable medium and/or for viewing via a suitable display.

In yet another embodiment, laryngoscope **30**, or **80** includes an illumination system **62**, or **122** incorporated within handle **32** or **82**, and may include additional light guides **69**, **131** associated therewith.

Laryngoscope **30** or **80** may be produced from a variety of materials, for example, such as stainless steel or suitable plastics which may provide for disposability or a degree of flexibility in blade **36** or **90**.

In yet another embodiment, laryngoscope **30** or **80** is integrally formed, such that handle **32**, offset member **38**, extra-oral blade portion **42**, and intra-oral blade portion **52**, are formed as a unitary piece. Similarly, in yet another embodiment, laryngoscope **80** is integrally formed, such that handle **82**, blade mount **86**, offset member **88**, extra-oral blade portion **94**, and intra-oral blade portion **96**, are formed as a unitary piece.

It is also anticipated herein that blades incorporating the features of the claimed invention may be provided which are adaptable for use with various prior art laryngoscope handles, which are currently in use, to provide the advantages herein disclosed.

Benefits, other advantages, and solutions to problems have been described above with regard to specific embodiments. However, the benefits, advantages, solutions to problems, and any element(s) that may cause any benefit, advantage, or solution to occur or become more pronounced are

not to be construed as critical, required, or essential features or elements of any or all the claims. As used herein, the terms “comprises,” “comprising,” or any other variations thereof, are intended to cover a non-exclusive inclusion, such that a process, method, article, or apparatus that comprises a list of elements does not include only those elements but may include other elements not expressly listed or inherent to such process, method, article, or apparatus. Further, no element described herein is required for the practice of the invention unless expressly described as “essential” or “critical.”

The preceding detailed description of exemplary embodiments of the invention makes reference to the accompanying drawings, which show the exemplary embodiment by way of illustration. While these exemplary embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention, it should be understood that other embodiments may be realized and that logical and mechanical changes may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. For example, the steps recited in any of the method or process claims may be executed in any order and are not limited to the order presented. Further, the present invention may be practiced using one or more servers, as necessary. Thus, the preceding detailed description is presented for purposes of illustration only and not of limitation, and the scope of the invention is defined by the preceding description, and with respect to the attached claims.

The invention claimed is:

1. A laryngoscope assembly having:

- a handle;
- an offset member having a first end coupled to said handle; and
- a blade coupled to a second end of said offset member; and

wherein said offset member is orthogonal to said handle and said blade, and disposes said blade away from said handle to increase visibility within a buccal cavity of a patient by placing said handle away from a line of sight of an operator when said blade is placed in said buccal cavity;

wherein said first end comprises a mount couplable to said handle via at least one of a threaded engagement, a fastening mechanism, a friction fitting, a tab and slot arrangement, a coaxial engagement; and

wherein said blade comprises a curved extra-oral blade portion and an intra-oral blade portion comprising an elongate and flat body.

2. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **1**, wherein said extra-oral blade portion comprises a proximal portion joined to said second end of said offset member, and a distal portion.

3. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **2**, wherein said intra-oral blade portion comprises a proximal end unitarily extending from said distal portion of said curved extra-oral blade portion and terminating at a distal tip, such that said extra-oral blade portion and said intra-oral blade portion are integrally formed.

4. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **3**, wherein said extra-oral blade portion is curved between said proximal portion and said distal portion to form an arcuate portion.

5. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **4**, wherein said intra-oral blade portion comprises an elongate body that is flat with an upper surface and an opposite lower surface.

6. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **5**, wherein said offset member comprises a relatively small cross-sectional

area and a minimal footprint within an interior of said buccal cavity to increase visibility of said interior of the buccal cavity.

7. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **6**, wherein said offset member comprises at least one of a rectangular cross-section and a cylindrical cross-section in a plane orthogonal to said handle along an entire length of said offset member.

8. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **7**, wherein said offset member is L-shaped, with one portion extending from one end of said handle along a longitudinal axis of said handle, and an orthogonal portion coupled to said extra-oral blade portion.

9. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **7**, wherein said offset member is curved, with one portion extending from a wall of said handle and a curved portion coupled to said extra-oral blade portion.

10. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **7**, wherein said offset member is hingedly connected to said handle at one end to facilitate pivotal movement of said offset member with respect to said handle, wherein said blade is placed in at least one of a plurality of positions to suit an operator and said patient, and secured in at least one of said plurality of positions.

11. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **7**, wherein at least one of said handle, said offset member, said extra-oral blade portion and said intra-oral blade portion are hingedly connected to each other.

12. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **1**, wherein said mount is removably attached to said handle.

13. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **12**, further comprising an illumination system to provide light within said buccal cavity when said intra-oral blade portion is placed therein.

14. A laryngoscope assembly having:

- a handle;
- an offset member having one end coupled to said handle;
- a blade coupled to another end of said offset member; and
- wherein said one end is coupled to said handle via a blade mount, and said blade comprises an intra-oral blade portion and an extra-oral blade portion; and wherein said blade mount comprises a first longitudinal axis, said offset member comprises a second longitudinal axis, said extra-oral blade portion comprises a third longitudinal axis, and said intra-oral blade portion comprises a fourth longitudinal axis, such that said second longitudinal axis of offset member is orthogonal to said first longitudinal axis of said handle and third longitudinal axis of said extra-oral blade portion, and said fourth longitudinal axis of said intra-oral blade portion is orthogonal to said second and third longitudinal axis of said extra-oral blade portion.

15. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **14**, wherein said extra-oral blade portion comprises a curved body, and said intra-oral blade portion comprises a longitudinal planar body.

16. The laryngoscope assembly of claim **14**, wherein said extra-oral blade portion comprises a curved body, and said intra-oral blade portion comprises a longitudinal body having opposed longitudinal edges such that said longitudinal body is curved between said opposed longitudinal edges.

17. A method of performing laryngoscopy comprising the steps of:

- providing a laryngoscope having a handle, an offset member and a blade; said offset member having a proximal end coupled to said handle via a

blade mount and a proximal end coupled to said blade, said blade comprising a curved extra-oral blade portion and an intra-oral blade portion; wherein said blade mount comprises a first longitudinal axis, said offset member comprises a second longitudinal axis, said extra-oral blade portion 5 comprises a third longitudinal axis, and said intra-oral blade portion comprises a fourth longitudinal axis, such that said second longitudinal axis of said offset member is orthogonal to said first longitudinal axis of said blade mount and said third longitudinal axis of said extra-oral blade portion, and 10 said fourth longitudinal axis of said intra-oral blade portion is orthogonal to said third longitudinal axis of said extra-oral blade portion; wherein said extra-oral blade portion comprises a curved body, and said intra-oral blade portion comprises a longitudinal body having opposed longitudinal 15 edges such that said longitudinal body is curved between said opposed longitudinal edges;

holding said handle in one hand and inserting said intra-oral blade portion into an open buccal cavity of a patient in a supine position, with said curved extra-oral 20 blade portion over a lip of said patient;

positioning said intra-oral blade portion for laryngeal exposure; and

whereby said offset member disposes said blade away from said blade mount to increase visibility within said 25 buccal cavity by placing said handle away from a line of sight when said blade is placed in the buccal cavity to provide a substantially unobstructed view within said buccal cavity for said laryngeal exposure.

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